THE VANITY OF All Pretences FOR TOLLERATION,

WHEREIN

The Late *Pleas* for *Tolleration* are fully Answered;

And the Popular Arguments drawn from the Practice of the United *Netherlands* are stated at large, and shown to be weak, fallacious and insufficient.

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THIS Majesties Gracious Declaration to maintain the Government in Church and State as by Law Establish'd, and the Opinion all good men have of the Affection of this present Parliament, to those Laws by which the Protestant Religion is fenc'd on every side, may seem to render the Labour of a private hand on their behalf useless and superfluous. Yet since some have openly, others in disguise invaded these Fences, and proceeded to that degree of Confidence, as to recommend the Attempt to the Parliament now Assembled; it may be expected perhaps that those who enjoy the Protection of those Laws, should not leave them all defenceless under the odious Imputation of Injustice and Cruelty, to depend merely upon the Authority of their first Establishment, and the Favour of the Present Government: Our Adversaries would then be thought justly to conclude, that we despaired of the merit of our Cause, and of approving it by Reason to the Judgment of any Impartial man. Therefore I have endeavoured in this Treatise, to shew the Vanity of those Cavils, (for I should be guilty of too much Indulgence, should I give them the style of Reason or Argument,) against the Prosecution of Dissenters according to Law. And though there should be no great sin, or publick inconvenience in a General Toleration, yet the Pleas that recommend it, are so mean, that they who might not be afraid, might yet be asham'd to allow it upon such miserable motives.

Yet I must confess that the Advocates for Tolera-

tion have one conſiderable Advantage in this Diſpute, that they are on the popular part of the Queſtion, and the ſeeming good nature of the Plea, without much reaſoning, is ſufficient to recommend it: Whereas, all Puniſhment is odious to the People, and neither Law, nor Reaſon, nor Neceſſity, can perfectly reconcile them to it. It is madneſs then to endeavour to perſuade men out of their Humanity, that is, out of their Nature; and he truly deſerves the utmoſt ſeverity that can take delight in it: What ſhall we do then? Shall we give up the Cauſe, and Subſcribe to a Toleration? Nothing leſs, and that becauſe in our Circumſtances, it is not only contrary to Religion, and Civil Prudence, but alſo to Charity and Compaſſion; it is not always Mercy to Indulge, nor Cruelty to Inflict Puniſhment: Unleſs we conclude, that a Father who corrects his Child has not ſo much tenderneſs for him as a Stranger, or a Servant that intercedes for his Pardon. But if Clemency muſt take place, why ſhould not the Publick challenge it in the firſt place? and why ſhould they be judged merciful, who to humour and indulge one Party, would expoſe a whole Nation to Confuſion and Ruin? If this be tender Mercy, it is that the Scripture brands with the name of Cruelty. And beſides all this, a ſteddy and diſcreet Execution of the Laws againſt Diſſenters, might happily have been a much more merciful Conduct even in reſpect of them, than the remiſneſs or connivance that tempted them to preſumptuous ſins.

The Diſſenters have been very induſtrious to let us know, that this is the true ſtate of the Caſe between the Government and them: That this Conſtitution ſtands no longer, when they have ſtrength and opportunity to deſtroy it: Many of them are under an Oath

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to endeavour the ſubverſion of this Church under the name of a Reformation, and could never be brought to renounce that Conſpiracy: And therefore what can be expected from thoſe that now maintain the Lawfulneſs of that Covenant, but that they ſhould conceive themſelves bound in Conſcience to execute their Vow, as ſoon as they could recover thoſe Circumſtances in which they took it? But the Diſſenters, you'l ſay, are divided upon this point: It is true, they are in that part that concerns their own Eſtabliſhment, but they are unanimous in Vowing our Deſtruction; and it would be but poor comfort to a Town that neglected to make a timely Defence, to ſee the Conquerours that were United in the Aſſault, afterwards to fall out at the dividing of the Plunder.

Nor can we be ſuſpected to furmiſe groundleſs and imaginary dangers from the growth of a Party that has devoted us to Ruin, and that beſides, by an unnatural and fortunate Rebellion, by the deliberate and ſolemn Murder of a moſt Excellent and Merciful Prince, by a heavy and tedious Tyranny of many years, by ſeveral Conſpiracies ſince the Reſtauration, by Aſſociation againſt the Succeſſion of His Majeſty, and a formed Project of Rebellion, which I am afraid is not yet wholly diſconcerted; and in ſhort, by the Inceſſant working of a Turbulant Spirit, have given us much greater demonſtrations of our danger, than we could have wiſhed, and he that pretends not to be convinced by all this, to apprehend danger to the Government, from the Toleration of ſuch men, muſt ſurely be deſirous of thoſe Events we apprehend, and wiſh the things which we fear.

Toleration therefore can ſerve to no other purpoſe, than to be the Nurſe of a Faction that is implacable,

which as it grows up, will more and more deſpiſe this Infant Diſpenſation, and contend for maſtery: Nor can we expect that they ſhould acquieſce here, when they have got ſtrength to attempt farther, no more than that a gang of ſturdy Beggars will compound for a ſmall Alms, when they have a fair opportunity to Rob. The Advocates for Toleration reply, That it is not Faction, but Conſcience which they plead for: But it is an eaſier matter to diſtinguiſh, than it is to ſeparate thoſe two things. Experience has found them to be inſeparable Companions in the body of our Diſſenters. The mind of man can make a thouſand abſtractions that are impracticable in the world; and a Philoſopher may diſtinguiſh between the Leaven, and the Maſs infected by it, and yet be never able to part them.

But when one Diſſenter pleads for Toleration in the behalf of all the reſt, it is not Conſcience, but Faction he would recommend; for the Diſſenters differ as much in matters of Conſcience among themſelves, as they do from us, and therefore cannot be judged to recommend thoſe Errours and Practices for Toleration, which they themſelves judge ſinful and damnable, upon the account of Conſcience; nor did thoſe of them that were in Power think it either lawful or fit to permit all the reſt. What Spiritual Kindred, I pray, has a Presbyterian with a Quaker? or an Independant with a *Muggletonian*? or an Anabaptiſt with any of the reſt? But though they make different Sects in Religion, yet they make but one Faction. This is the Center wherein they all unite; At an Election or a Riot they make but one Congregation, and never fail to go one way; or if you would view them in greater Order, call to mind the Cavalcade that attended the E. of *Shafteſbury*, in his ſetting out towards

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the Parliament of *Oxford*, and you will eaſily comprehend the ſole Union of all Sects, and the certain Conſequence of a General Toleration. A great man indeed may ſerve his Intereſt, or his Ambition, by taking all ſorts of Sects into his Protection; but how to reconcile ſo many Contradictions of Conſcience to his own, I muſt confeſs my underſtanding too narrow to comprehend. But I muſt beg of my Reader to underſtand this, without any reflection upon the Noble Perſon that has lately ſpoke ſo favourably of Toleration; for all that have the honour to be acquainted with his Perſon, or but with his Reputation, muſt do him that Juſtice, as to acquit him of all high and dangerous Deſigns.

They that plead for an Indefinite *Toleration to all Diſſenters whatever, upon the account of Religion*, do not ſeem to me to have conſidered all the ſorts and variety of theſe to whom it is to be extended, for upon thoſe Terms the Indian Pagans may come and demand conveniences for their Pagods, and the Mahometans may pray that their Moſques may ſtand among our Churches. Some fanciful man may fall in love with the *Greek* or *Roman* Superſtitions, and require by vertue of a General Indulgence, that the Ancient Rites of thoſe People may be reſtored, as well as their Languages and Learning. In ſhort, there is no Superſtition ſo ſenſleſs, or ſo barbarous, but has good Title to Toleration, *if all Diſſenters whatever upon the account of Religion*, are to be included. Nay, it ſtops not here, for thoſe that have no Religion at all, diſſent from us upon *the account of Religion*; and if an Atheiſt ſhould judge it an act of great Charity and Generoſity, and ſurpaſſing all the Heroick Atchievements of *Hercules*, to attempt to redeem

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Mankind from that Captivity of mind into which Religion had brought them, and from ſuch Opinions of a God as ſeem'd to him not only unmanly and ridiculous, but extremely inconvenient and oppreſſive, why ſhould he be reſtrained, if Toleration be extended to all that diſſent upon the account of Religion? And beſides, an Atheiſt can pretend Conſcience too, ſince that is nothing elſe but Human Reaſon employed upon the account of Religion.

It may be the Council for Toleration will ſay, That theſe Atheiſts and Pagans have not retained them, and that they plead only for Diſſenting Chriſtians, or perhaps for *Jews*, who Worſhip the true God as well as we, though they receive not all the diſtinctions of the Deity, which Chriſt has revealed to us. Be it ſo then, ſince they may narrow their favour as they pleaſe, yet, that which I ſay, is nevertheleſs true, that the *Topicks* they uſe to perſuade a Toleration, will ſerve the turn of Atheiſm or Idolatry, as well as of Chriſtian or Jewiſh Diſſenters; as we ſhall obſerve when we come to examine them. And if ſuch an Univerſal Toleration as we have been ſpeaking of, be not manifeſtly abſurd, that will be ſo too that comprehends all Chriſtian Diſſenters; for there have been, and may be Sects of Chriſtians ſo called, that all reaſonable men would judge more intolerable than *Pagans*. And that we may not fetch inſtances ſo far as *Irenæus* or *Epiphanius*, there are among us ſome Sects no leſs extravagant, than the wildeſt of the old Hereticks. The Revelations of *Muggleton* and *Reeve*, the expectation of the preſent *Milinary's*. The Spirit of the *Quakers* are not only abſurd to the higheſt degree, but very dangerous to the Goverment, and of deſparate conſequence; if the infection ſhould ſpread far among the People,

ple, what a World were we like to have! Should *Muggleton* ſtrike the minds of a great number with a dread of his Commiſſion, and that *whoſoever he ſhall Curſe ſhall be Curſed*? And conſidering there is no cheat ſo groſs, that does not take with ſome of the Common People, one would think that it ſhould be as much the Duty of the Magiſtrate, to forbid Impoſtors and Deceivers in Religion, as it is to prohibit Juglers and Fortune-tellers, who do not only cheat the People of their Money, but infect them with hurtful Superſtitions, to which they are of themſelves but too much inclin'd. Some Chriſtians have writ in defence of *Polygamy*, and affirmed that practice to be not only lawful and expedient, but to many neceſſary in point of Conſcience. What if a man ſhould perſwade himſelf that he were of that number, and take as many Wives as any of the Patriarchs, it is part of his Religion, why ſhould he be proſecuted upon that account, if all ſorts of Chriſtians have right to Toleration? A *Quaker* refuſes to pay Tithes, as much upon Principle of Conſcience, as he refuſes to go to Church, and to pay any civil reſpect. The firſt part concerns the Laity as well as the Clergy to look after, and to conſider how far Indulgence is neceſſary to a Chriſtian Sectary miſtaking to the prejudice of his Neighbour; if he be ſued, or diſtrain'd, or impriſon'd, alas it is all upon the account of Religion; take the poor man into the Verge of Chriſtian Toleration. Nay, if his Conſcience ſhould forbid him to pay Rent, he is a poor deluded man, why ſhould he be Perſecuted or Moleſted upon the account of his Religion? It will be ſaid perhaps, that no man intends to allow any pretence of Religion, to the prejudice of Common Right, for that were to tolerate injuſtice, and why ſhould I be judged in my Civil Right

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by another mans Conſcience? Well, I am glad that Toleration has any bounds, and that in any caſe, the Law is allowed to reſtrain a wild and extravagant Conſcience. But why it ſhould be upon this only account, and no other, I do not ſee, if juſtice will not permit that one mans Religion ſhould not do wrong to another Perſon. How ſhall Charity permit that a man ſhould do hurt to himſelf, it is as much Charity to reſtrain as to ſet at liberty, to tye ſome mens hands as to looſe the Chains of others; and beſides, ſince theſe diſcaſes of the underſtanding are commonly infectious, like ſome of thoſe of the Body, it is Charity to all ſuch as are capable of the infection, to uſe all poſſible means to keep it from coming to them, or of thruſting it ſelf into places of Concourſe. Since therefore there muſt be bounds put to the Toleration of Chriſtian Sects, and the Author of the conſiderations excludes *falſe Pretenders to Religion and Chriſtianity, thoſe wicked Enemies of Magiſtracy, the Sacred Ordinance of God*: And in another place we have this Act of Univerſal Toleration extended *to all*, but with this reſtriction, *as far as they are tolerable*. He might have done more Service to all pretenders, if he had ſtated the caſe how far, and wherein every Sect was tolerable. It is a hard task to impoſe upon a Parliament, to examine every principle or practice of every Sect, and to ſeparate the tolerable from the intolerable. The Presbyterians have declar'd all the other Sects to be intolerable; the Independants will not endure Anabaptiſts or Quakers where they have any Authority; the *Scotch* Covenanters declare againſt all thoſe that are without the Covenant; the Anabaptiſts and Quakers exclaim againſt Presbyterians and Independants as intolerable, *pereunt per mutua vulnera Fratres.*

Epiſt. Ded. to the D. of B.

vres. Since therefore the conſiderer was not pleas'd to direct either the Parliament, or any body elſe to diſcern between thoſe Sects that are tolerable, and thoſe that are not, and between what is tolerable in every particular Sect, and what is not, I ſhall leave this point as needing farther explication. And I have ſome kind of ſuſpition, that he will hardly think it adviſable to be very particular in diſtinguiſhing, for ſeveral things that may be to him intolerable, may be the chiefeſt delights of the ſeveral Sects, and if they are not tolerated in theſe, they would not much care whether they had any Toleration at all; what thanks will the Sectaries pay him for being tolerated by halves, to have one part of their Conſcience free, and the other bound up. And they will think themſelves no more enlarg'd by ſuch a limited favour, than a man that has but one Foot at liberty, while the other is faſt in the Stocks. In the mean time, I will take the liberty to examine certain *Queries and Conſiderations*, which have been made lately in the behalf of a general Toleration.

All theſe *I* conceive may be reduc'd to theſe three Heads.

1. Either to Religion, which they pretend enjoins forbearance, and forbids all conſtraint in Religious matters.

2. Or to Reaſon, that condemns all Compulſion as unſeemly and abſurd.

3. Or to civil prudence, that inclines to Toleration, as conducing much to the peace and benefit of Society.

1. Quer. Upon the first Head, a Noble Person demands, *Whether there be any thing more directly opposite to the Doctrine and Practice of Jesus Christ, than to use any kind of force upon men in matters of Religion, and consequently, whether all those that Practice it, let them be of what Church or Sect they please, ought not justly to be called Antichristian?*

If a poor man might be so bold with so great an Author, as to pretend to understand any thing he affects to be ignorant of, I would answer directly to so vehement a question, and affirm, that I knew several things *more directly opposite to the Doctrine and Practice of Christ, than to use force in matters of Religion.* For Example, Irreligion, Atheism, Blasphemy, Burlesquing of the Scripture, Murder, Adultery, Fornication, Licentiousness. These we are sure are directly contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of Christ. But as for using of force in matters of Religion, I do not know any passage in all the Gospels, that absolutely and expresly forbid it. Where does Christ forbid a Christian Magistrate to silence Impostors, Blasphemers, turbulent Persons pretending Religion? Where does he condemn a Religious Prince that makes use of his Authority, to preserve the Christian Doctrine uncorrupted, by restraining those that mistake dangerously themselves, and would seduce others into the same errors? If any such place there be, I'm sure it is not in my Copy of the Gospels, and I have the less reason to suspect it of any fault, because there is no such thing in the *Geneva* Bible, at leastwise it could not be found, when *Servetus* was put to death for Blasphemy. Nor could any such passage be in the *Dutch* Text or Annotations, when the Remonstrants

ſtrants were forced to travel or go to Jaol. Nor is it likely, the *Lutherans* would be ſo fierce, if they could have ſpy'd any ſuch paſſage as this in their Books. The vulgar Latin I need not mention, to be ſure, there is no ſuch Doctrine there, nor can it be, ſince it is ſo directly oppoſite to the Holy Inquiſition, it would be too confident a Criticiſm to adventure to give an account how this difference happens, and what Book it ſhould be that his Grace has miſtaken for the Bible.

But are there not ſeveral paſſages of Scripture alledged to this purpoſe? there are indeed ſome, but very ſore againſt their own ſenſe and inclination, and when they are urg'd, they will have a ſpeedy anſwer.

However, is not this uſing of force contrary *to the Practice of Chriſt*? To none that I know: Chriſt indeed did never uſe any force: No more did he condemn the Woman taken in Adultery, nor ſentence *Peter* to the Pillory for denying him by a falſe Oath. Can therefore no Magiſtrate uſe any force, nor puniſh theſe Crimes without forfeiting his Chriſtianity? Our Saviour, to prevent ſuch conſequences as might be drawn from his Practice, declar'd himſelf to be but a private Perſon in all civil reſpects, his Kingdom was not of this World, he was no Magiſtrate, and therefore did uſe no force upon any account, and therefore his example in this caſe can be no direction to him that is inveſted with civil power, and ſuſtains a Perſon quite different from the Character our Saviour bore. It is true indeed that Chriſt rebuked *James* and *John* for demanding his order or permiſſion to command

Fire from Heaven to consume the *Samaritans* that refus'd to receive him, and what could be more unwarrantable or barbarous then this Proposal? Why should they desire the sudden destruction of Men, over whose lives they had no power? and for a fault that no Law made capital? Nay, Christ himself as man, had no power to take away their Lives, tho' they had deserv'd it; nor can we be sure that this which so much provokes their indignation, was any matter of Religion at all, but only a refusal of a Civil and Hospitable Reception to our Saviour on his Journey towards *Jerusalem*; but whether he preach'd there or no, or that they did any affront to his Character and his Doctrine, the Scripture doth not say, and the contrary is most probable from the Relation of the Evangelist, but neither this, or any other instance of our Saviours Practice, obliges the Conscience of the Civil Magistrate, not to punish such Persons or Sects of Christians that corrupt the Religion, and disturb the quiet of the Church or State under his charge, since therefore the Practice of punishing Dissenters is contrary neither to the Doctrine, nor Practice of Christ; I hope they that use it upon great occasions, may be discharg'd of the odious imputation of Antichristian.

But if *all those that Practice*, this odious method, to use *forcible means in matters of Religion, what Church or Sect soever they may be of, are Antichristian.* What shall we do for Christians? The Church of *Rome* at this rate must be the most Antichristian of all. The Presbyterians were always as much Antichristian as they were able, and the Independants of *New-England* are as visibly Antichristian, as if they had all the Horns and Marks of the Beast; and if these be all Antichristi-

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an, who have we left capable of the benefit of Toleration? For surely if any sort of Men be intolerable, they are such who truly deserve that Title.

Consideration 1. Another Author stirr'd up by *the excellent discourse of the D. of B.* enlarges upon this Head, and shews, *that the Apostles were only commission'd* "to Preach and Teach the Christian Doctrine, "that they were Embassadors to beseech Men to be "reconcil'd to God, and not to use any forcible "means to bring People to conform to his Worship.

An Author after all his pains, may surely be allow'd to give his Book what Title he pleases, provided the Reader may have his Freedom to Interpret. This Book is made up of several parcels, which he calls *Considerations*, and if this first must pass under that Title, it cannot be in the literal sense, but should be interpreted as Dreams are by contraries. For if our Author had considered, tho' never so little, he must needs have discerned that all this is no more against all forcible means, than it is against humane Learning; the Apostles used as little of one as of the other in converting of the World; let us allow then that the Apostles us'd no forcible means to convert the World, but reduced it only by perswasion, what then? Then no body else ought to think themselves wiser than the Apostles, and to endeavour to convert the World by force; agreed. But what is all this to our present purpose? Then no forcible means ought to be us'd to bring Dissenters to Church, or to hinder their Meetings. Here the consideration is too short, and draw it as long as you please, will never come to the point, unless he can satisfy us in this one thing, that there

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may be no other Methods us'd in the Government of a Church already Eſtabliſh'd, than thoſe that have been us'd in the Converſion of Infidels; this whole matter will perhaps be much clearer to him, if he pleaſe to take notice of theſe plain and certain Truths.

1. That the Apoſtles had, and us'd greater Authority over thoſe they had already converted, than over thoſe that were yet to be converted.

2. That tho' they were ſent onely as Ambaſſadors to unbelievers, to perſwade them to be reconcil'd to God, yet when they had effected that Reconciliation, they were, by vertue of the Commiſſion, the Rulers and Governours of thoſe new Conqueſts of the Goſpel.

3. That tho' their Commiſſion gave them no civil Authority, yet were they impower'd to uſe forcible means in matters of Religion, and to reduce thoſe to Conformity, that walk'd diſorderly, and departed from the form of wholeſom Doctrine delivered to them: For I take Diſcipline to be ſomewhat different from *perſuaſion*; and the Rod that St. *Paul* ſpeaks of how Metaphorical ſoever it be, to be ſomewhat more than *beſeeching*. In ſhort, thoſe that reſiſted their Authority, felt the weight of it. Some were delivered to Satan, to learn not to Blaſpheme, becauſe they had made *Shipwrack of the Faith*. They were caſt out of the Society of Chriſtians, not only from all correſpondence in matters of Religion, but alſo from commerce of civil Society and good Neighbourhood; and therefore ſuppoſing any one whole City or Province then of the Chriſtian Religion, the Excommunication of an Apoſtle would have had the ſame force with a

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civil Out-lawry or Baniſhment, and how can you think him not baniſht to all effect, with whom no Perſon of his Country will have any communication? And what would have become of *Cerinthus* in a Chriſtian City, where St. *John* had been Biſhop, if all would have been of the ſame mind with the Apoſtle, (as probably they had) not to come under the ſame roof with that Blaſphemous Heretick.

4. The *Deſtruction of the fleſh, that the Spirit might be ſaved*; though I dare not be poſitive in the explication, does without diſpute ſignify ſomething of forcible means, and of a different nature from perſwaſion, and the vehement expreſſion of St. *Paul* concerning the Turbulent people that diſturb'd the Churches of *Galatia*; *I wiſh they were cut off that trouble you*, is of a ſtrein beyond beſeeching. I ſhall not inſiſt upon theſe paſſages, leſt I ſhould be thought to plead for the Inquiſition, and to juſtify the putting of men to death for Religion, which I am as far from approving, as I am from a deſire that I might be the firſt ſufferer by ſuch a Law; for I look upon all Capital puniſhments not only too ſevere for the miſtakes of the underſtanding, though there might be ſome wilfulneſs and perverſeneſs mix'd with them, but of all ſorts the moſt improper and abſurd, ſince he that takes away the Life of a Heretick, commits an inviſible cruelty greater than that which is ſeen, by taking from him at the ſame time all opportunity of returning to a better mind; and ſince all forcible means us'd in matters of Religion, ought to be directed to the benefit of thoſe toward whom they are us'd, as well as the ſafety of others, nothing can be more contrary to, or deſtructive of that end, than the putting of men to

death

death for errors of belief, how groſs or dangerous ſoever they may be. And this practice is the more inexcuſable, becauſe there are other means ſufficient to prevent the ſpreading of the diſeaſe, and may contribute not a little to the cure of the infected.

5. Laſtly, if the Apoſtles, who had no Civil Power, did yet puniſh their Diſſenters, not only by ſharp reproofs, but with Civil inconveniences too, ſurely the Chriſtian Magiſtrate, who is endu'd with that power from above, may ſo far make uſe of it, upon the account of Religion, as to ſecure the Peace of the Church, and Purity of the Chriſtian Doctrine, as to render men of corrupt and turbulent minds uneaſy in the outward circumſtances of Life, and to tye up their hands from diſperſing the miſchief among the People: And laſtly, to diſcourage wanton, or perverſe, or deſigning perſons to attempt upon the Faith and Charity by which his Subjects are united.

Conſid. 2. To the ſame Head we may reduce the ſecond Conſideration: *That the uſing of outward Compulſion in matters of Religion, does only ſerve to make men Hypocrites, but works no ſaving Converſion.*

That compulſion in matters of Religion may make ſome Hypocrites, muſt be allow'd, ſo do all Encouragements, Laws, ſenſe of ſhame, and the Opinion of the World; and if nothing that may ſerve to make a Man a Hyprocrite may be us'd, we muſt lay aſide not only all Penal Laws, but all Charity too: But that this Compulſion ſhould *ſerve only* to make men Hypocrites, dropt I am afraid from our Author without conſideration, for there may be ſome that refuſe to conform

conform to the eſtabliſh'd Worſhip, becauſe they are aſham'd to depart from what they have once profeſs'd; they dread the reproach of their Party, and the gaze of a Congregation upon a new Convert. There may be others that refuſe to conform, as much upon the account of Intereſt as of Conſcience; for who does not know that the Diſſenters are more engag'd by their mutual dealing among themſelves, than they are by their Church-Covenant; for a poor Presbyterian or Independant to go to Church, is to forfeit all his Cuſtom, and to be beggar'd, and to fall under a ſecret Perſecution, that will more certainly undo him, than the execution of all the Penal Laws; therefore to theſe, compulſion ſerves not to make them Hypocrites, but to free their Conſcience from the practice of Hypocriſie, that was in ſome meaſure become neceſſary to them, and cannot be eſteem'd the forcing of Religion, but the breaking of an unlawful and dangerous combination; and ſince there may be Hypocrites of both ſides, why ſhould they be angry if we take away their chaff, which may make their heap ſhew bigger, but add little to the value of it: Such as may do them no great Spiritual good, but may do the Government a great temporal miſchief. Laſtly, ſince according to the Doctrine of moſt of the Diſſenters, he that is a real Saint, cannot by all the force in the World be made a Hypocrite, why ſhould they be afraid that compulſion will effect impoſſibilities? And if thoſe upon whom it can have any influence were Hypocrites before, I do not ſee any reaſon why they ſhould be ſo much concern'd for them.

Experience has taught us that compulſion in matters of Religion, ſerves many times to render men

more teachable, and willing to be inſtructed; when a man has brought himſelf into inconvenience, he is deſirous to examine what it is for, and when he has weigh'd the Reaſons on both ſides, he may be of opinion that his duty and his intereſt go the ſame way. How many Diſſenters keep off they know not why? how many rail at our Service that never read a word of it? That diſparage our Miniſters, and never heard them? How difficult is it to obtain from the Zeal of many Diſſenters ſo much Truce, as to hear what one can ſay to them with patience and civility, but this frowardneſs is ſomewhat abated, when they find themſelves entangled with difficulties, and then they may condeſcend to liſten to reaſon; & this opportunity may be ſo well improved, that in concluſion they ſhall acknowledge this compulſion, as a ſingular Mercy of God, and apply the words of the Pſalmiſt to their Caſe, *Before I was troubl'd I went wrong.*

But now ſuppoſe the worſt, that this compulſion would ſerve to make many Hypocrites, and that moſt of them at firſt might come to Church only to ſave their Purſes, yet they may not continue always ſo, but it is probable they may profit ſo much by what they hear and ſee, as to be convinced of the folly of their former way, and what they did at firſt upon mean and ſordid reaſons, they may afterward continue to do out of conſcience and choice; ſo God is pleaſed ſometimes graciouſly to take the wiſe in their own Craftineſs. Some have gone to Church only out of curioſity, and have been caught; ſome have gone to mock, and return'd in Tears; *Saul* went to the Prophet only to enquire of his Fathers Aſſes, and received an Unction, which he little expected, and ſince truth and right

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are as manifeſtly on the ſide of the Church of *England*, as the Laws, why, ſhould not we hope well, if by any means Diſſenters may be brought but to the hearing of the Truth.

Not by conſtraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. This Text of Scripture, with which he is pleas'd to tip the end of this Conſideration, is brought thither much againſt its natural inclination, and I ſhould think that they who ſo much abhor compulſion in matters of Religion, ought not to uſe ſuch open violence to the Scriptures, to force them to their purpoſe, for thoſe Expreſſions relate only to the chearful and forward manner of the Miniſters doing their Duty, and have not the leaſt hint about compelling of Men to come to Church.

To the ſame Head we muſt reduce the third Conſideration.

Conſid. 3. *All ſorts of Perſons are for Liberty of Conſcience for themſelves, even thoſe that are moſt impoſing upon others. They would count it hard meaſure to be conſtrained to perform or forbear ſuch and ſuch things, which concern their Religion, or to ſuffer unproportionable penalties; And why ſhould not the Church-Proteſtants make the Presbyterians, the Independants, the Papiſts caſe their own in this point, ſeeing they are all fellow Chriſtians? Therefore whatſoever things ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do ye ſo unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

This Rule which is the Foundation of all Juſtice and

Charity, would be the Ruin of them both, if it were not reſtrained to things equally lawful or reaſonable: Now if it be an indifferent matter, what Religion or Sect any man is of, it will be very unreaſonable not to allow as well as to deſire Toleration. But it will be ſtill an abſurdity in him that believes all Religions indifferent to deſire any Toleration for himſelf, ſince his principle may comply with any ſort. But thoſe that deſire Toleration are of another mind, they think themſelves in the Right, and all thoſe with whom they refuſe to join in the wrong; and for the ſame reaſon that they which be tolerated themſelves, they refuſe to Tolerate others, with a *non-obſtante* to our Saviours Rule. If ſome Religions are falſe, if many Sects are in their very conſtitution and eſtabliſhment ſinful, this Rule cannot reach the preſent caſe. What Criminal can be puniſh'd, if for the Reading of that Text, he muſt have the benefit of his Clergy? What Child may not emancipate himſelf from diſcipline, if it will ſerve his turn to ſay to a Maſter or a Father, would you be us'd ſo your ſelf? There are ſome differences in Religion, about matters of the higheſt importance; there are Opinions of ſeveral Sects, that are Blaſphemous: There are others that corrupt and efferate Humane Nature, inſtead of improving it. There are other miſtakes of leſs conſequence in Religion, but from ſeveral Circumſtances of greater danger to the Government, all which if they have any claim to Toleration by this Rule, of doing to others as you will be done by, have no better than that which with the ſame Juſtice, may be made by all the deadly ſins.

Yet *why ſhould not the Church of* England, *make the Presby-*

Presbyterians Independants, and Papists case her own in this case, seeing they are all Fellow Christians? Nay, why not the *Anabaptists, Quakers, Muggletonians,* (for they claim kindred too, when it is low with them; and then we are all Brethren and Fellow Christians,) and if there be any other Sect unnamed, suppose it included, and then one Answer may serve them all, so that the Church of *England,* cannot make their case her own. 1. Because she thinks there is a great deal of difference, for many of them hold false and dangerous Opinions, and practice things utterly unlawful, and unchristian. 2. She ought so to judge since there is a real difference between Truth and Falshood, between Good and Evil, between those things in dispute, whether they are lawful or unlawful. Therefore if she be in possession of the Truth, she ought no more to make these Dissenters case her own, than a Judge ought to make that of a Prisoner at the Bar, whom he knows to be guilty, to be his own; and because if he were himself in the same circumstances of guilt, Flesh and Blood would tempt him to desire to escape; he ought not to determine therefore the Criminal before him must not suffer.

"*Obj.* If this be all, they that dissent from the "Church of *England,* may judge as hardly of her as "she does of them; confess'd, but who can help all this? yet the nature of things is not chang'd, by their thinking one way or other, in the same debate, many differing Parties may be very confident, and but one in the right, and be too certain that he was so, notwithstanding the contradiction of all the rest: And besides, I do not see of what great use the hard opinion of the pretenders to Toleration concerning the Church

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of *England*, can be to them to obtain it; one would think while they are Candidates for favour, this might be better omitted.

I am afraid that the *Presbyterians* and *Independants* will owe them but little thanks for tacking the *Papists*, that Abominable Antichriſtian name, upon their Plea for Toleration, for ſurely the Aſſociation cannot yet be ſo far worn out, nor the Cabaliſtical deviſe *of no Popery no Slavery*, be utterly forgot; ſurely their Celebrated Commiſſion to extirpate Antichriſt and Idolatry, is not yet given up: If they can endure this, they are much degenerated from their firſt principle of heat; nay, they muſt have chang'd their very ſpecies, and it will puzzle *Malibranche* with all his Ideas, to define a Proteſtant Diſſenter, when his Zeal againſt Popery is laid aſide.

Theſe are the Arguments offer'd at this time to recommend a general Toleration, from the nature and the precepts of Chriſtian Religion, and let any body judge after all the odious repreſentation of Compulſion in matters of Religion, whether from all that is ſaid, it does appear, that a Chriſtian Magiſtrate, whatever his own perſuaſion be, is bound in conſcience to allow every one the Exerciſe of his own way, and the Profeſſion of his own Opinion, how Abſurd, how Blaſphemous, how Damnable ſoever it may be; for this is the juſt Paraphraſe of univerſal Toleration.

And now for my part, to ſhew how little I am given to contradiction, I am content to yield the queſtion to the Conſiderer, or to the Noble Perſon, who is above conſideration, if their Principles will be ſatisfy'd with theſe Arguments alledg'd on their behalf, let

let the Conſiderator then go back (for I will not be ſo abſurd as to ſend a Perſon of Quality upon ſuch an Errand) and conſult thoſe whom he nominates for Toleration, the *Presbyterians*, *Independants*, and *Papiſts*, and if they declare it for their Opinion, *that it is the Will of God*, that neither Reſtraint nor Compulſion ſhould be us'd to Men in Religious Matters, let them obtain all the Indulgence they can wiſh; but as to the laſt of theſe, I ſhall not need to trouble them or my Author, becauſe I cannot tell how well they may be acquainted; for if a man may gueſs at his correſpondence, he ſeems to hold more with the Proteſtant Diſſenters: Nor is it needful to make long enquiry in a matter ſo well known. The Judgment of the Church of *Rome*, concerning this point is as clear, and as viſible, as the Fire with which they uſe to reduce Hereticks to Aſhes.

It muſt be confeſs'd, that ſome Princes of that communion, partly for reaſons of State, and partly out of the Clemency and Generoſity of their temper, have ſhielded their Proteſtant Subjects from the fury of the Eccleſiaſticks, and abhorr'd to be the Executioners of their Hypocritical cruelty, who pretend, that they have no power themſelves to take away Life; ſo the High Prieſt and the *Jews* declar'd it was not lawful for them to put any man to death, yet forced *Pilate* to paſs Sentence upon the Son of God, becauſe they had before judged him worthy of death.

Among thoſe barbarous Pagans, where men were us'd to be Sacrificed to Idols, the Butchery was always accounted part of the Prieſts Office, and I ſee no reaſon why the *Dominicans* or the *Grand Vicar*, if they

they will have the Blood of Hereticks, ſhould not endure the Odium, and the pollution of ſhedding it themſelves. I know ſome Princes have paid dear for refuſing to deſtroy ſuch as the Church of *Rome* called Hereticks, one was murdered by a *Dominican*, a Miniſter of the Inquiſition by his Vow, and another ſtabb'd into the Heart by a Diſciple of the *Jeſuits*, whether becauſe they ſuſpected ſome Favours or Indulgence for Hereſie might remain there, or becauſe they were impatient to wait longer for that noble part, which that great Prince promiſed them a Legacy after his deceaſe.

Since then our Conſiderer can have no hopes of approving his conſideration to this Party, and to bring them to a vow with him, that it is not the Will of God, that any force ſhould be us'd in matters of Religion; Let him go to the Presbyterians, and enquire what is their opinion concerning Toleration; it is true, they have not been always in the ſame mind concerning this Goſpel, Duty; before the late Rebellion, when they were in their Infancy, they were as tender hearted as one could wiſh, but when they had once prevail'd, and got the power into their hands, they began to limit, and to diſtinguiſh, and at laſt openly to deny the lawfulneſs of that, which the Conſiderer makes to be ſo indiſpenſible a Chriſtian Duty; nay they could not in Conſcience conſent to a Toleration, even of their companions in Arms, thoſe that fought in the ſame Cauſe, and approach'd neareſt to their Principles; all the Arguments that could be us'd were not able to reconcile the conſcience of a Presbyterian to a Toleration of Independants, the Debates are Printed, and will furniſh any one that will take the pains

The Grand Debate.

pains to look into them, with the Arguments then us'd on both ſides of this Queſtion.

The *London* Miniſters of that time, for fear the Aſſembly might be carryed away by importunity, or diſpute, to yield any indulgence to their Indipendant Brethren, ſent them their Objections againſt it, in a Letter dated *Jan.* 1. 1645. In which they declare, that *To get a warrant to authoriſe their Separation from, and to have a liberty of drawing members out of it, i. e.* Their Church, *This we think to be plainly unlawful.*

Independancy is a Schiſme, Now we judge that no Schiſm is to be tolerated in the Church.

Some of the Independants in their Books have openly avow'd, that they plead for Liberty of Conſcience for others, as well as for themſelves. To plead for a general Toleration was then, it ſeems, argument enough not to indulge the pleaders even in their own particular way.

Now could they in Conſcience have allowed their diſſenting Brethren any Indulgence, they could not have refus'd perſons that had deſerv'd ſo well of them; but it was a thing of ſuch a nature, they muſt not by any means yield to. For *hereby* (ſay they) *we ſhall be involved in the guilt of other mens ſins, and thereby indanger'd to receive their plagues.* After this the Ordinance which the Independants ſtyled the Bloudy one, was drawn up, which made ſeveral miſtakes in Religion, to be felony, without bene-

fit of Clergy. Others to be confuted by a hot Irons to be apply'd to the face of the Blaſphemer. Others to be puniſh'd by impriſonment; for example, *to ſay that the Government of the Church by Presbyters*, ſuch as it was then projected *was Unlawful*, was accounted ſuch an inſolence, that impriſonment ſeemed rather an Indulgence than a puniſhment. This Ordinance was read twice in the Houſe of Commons, and ſtiffly debated, but the Sectaries and *Eraſtians* uniting their Forces againſt the Eſtabliſhment of Presbytery, that had projected already the ſuppreſſion of all the reſt, this was hindred from paſſing into an Act, but it was nevertheleſs defended and juſtify'd by the Presbyterian Party upon all occaſions; and tho' they could never diſpute it into a Law, yet ſometime after they paſs'd another Ordinance, by which they Condemned ſeveral erroneous Opinions, and Blaſphemies; and declared ſome to be Capital, but this was much ſhort of that which we have been ſpeaking of; however that Toleration which they were not able to confute by a Law, they were more zealous to oppoſe by their writings, and by all other means they conceiv'd uſeful to that purpoſe. They appointed Days of Humiliation for the Hereſies they could not puniſh by the Sword, and employ'd the moſt Zealous and Eloquent of their Party, to repreſent the ſin and miſchief of Toleration, and to inflame the minds of men againſt thoſe Errours and Sects, which they had been hitherto hindred from extirpating. There was no man of that Time that wrote more fully againſt Toleration than *Edwards*, who in a Treatiſe againſt Toleration, which he intitles, *The caſting*

ing down of the last and strongest Hold of Satan, makes Liberty of Conscience such an Abomination, that the High Commission, and the greatest Severity of the Bishops were rather to be indur'd: And I know not how Toleration can have the impudence to lift up its head after that in this Book *it is clearly prov'd and demonstrated by Scripture, sound Reason, Fathers, Schoolmen, Casuits, Protestants, Divines, Ecclesiastical History,* &c. *To be utterly unlawful and mischievous,* and this, *both of an universal Toleration of all Religions and Consciences, and of a limited and bounded, of some Sects onely,* how, *clearly this is prov'd or demonstrated by him,* I am not at present much concern'd to shew, having mention'd this Author with others of his Party only to ease our Considerator, and to direct him in his enquiry, concerning the Judgment of the Presbyterians about the universal Toleration, in which it is desir'd they may have their part, and since they have declar'd against it, it is a sort of Compulsion and Persecution, to put it upon them whether they will or no.

Bastwicke utter routing of the whole independent army: 1647.

What shall we say to all this? *Was the Doctrine and Practice of Christ* then known? Was not *the will of God* revealed *against all forcible means in matters of Religion?* Was it not observ'd, *that Compulsion serv'd only to make men Hypocrites?* Was not this Rule, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you,* &c. receiv'd into the Canon in those days? The Scriptures surely are the same, and if they were then so clearly against all Toleration, they must be so still; and have we heard of any New Revelation since, concerning this matter? So that we may assure our selves, that

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the Presbyterians will depart from what they have once aſſerted with ſo much noiſe and confidence of Demonſtration. Yet ſurely our Conſiderer could never have been guilty of ſuch unacceptable officiouſneſs, without ſome probable preſumption of their good liking, for whom it was intended. Nor can we imagine any man ſo fool-hardy, as to hazard the diſgrace of being diſowned by thoſe, for whom he ſo earneſtly intercedes. Admit then the mind of the Presbyterian Diſſenters be chang'd, and that their preſent Judgment is more moderate, and that their Advocate produce it under their hands, it will do them but little ſervice, becauſe thoſe that are not their Friends, will look upon the Inclination they may now have for Toleration, to proceed rather from their outward condition, than any inward conviction of mind; for in contrary Declarations of the ſame Perſon, that is commonly judged to be moſt ſincere, and according to his mind, that is made when he is in full Liberty, whereas the Act of a man under any reſtraint or neceſſity, is ever accounted leſs valid, and a leſs certain Declaration of his mind.

The Independants, who offer'd the Presbyterians ſo many Scriptures and Reaſons for Toleration, and took it hainouſly to be rejected by their Brethren, whom they knew to be but Uſurpers of Authority, after they themſelves had taſted of the forbidden fruit of Power, their Eyes were open'd, to diſcern plainly as many reaſons to refuſe Indulgence in Religion, as ever they had offer'd for it when their condition was lower. In the year 1650. there was an Act made againſt

againſt Blaſphemous and dangerous Errors, and the *Inſtrument of Government*, which *Cromwel* publiſh'd afterward, did not only exclude Prelacy and Popery from all benefit of Toleration, but made it Capital to maintain ſeveral Opinions in matters of Religion: By vertue of theſe new Laws, *Muggleton* and *Reeve* were condemned to *Bridewel*, *Naylor* was Stigmatiz'd, *Biddle* the *Socinian* was Try'd for his Life, for denying Chriſt to be the Son of God, and eſcap'd not ſo much by the Clemency of thoſe that Ruled then, as by an Error in his Indictment; it was in vain for any of theſe to plead their Conſcience, or that they were proſecuted againſt the Will of God, and the Rule of Common Juſtice, the Ruling and the Arm'd Conſcience, would ſtill aſſert its Power and Dominion over the Conſciences of Inferior Diſſenters.

'It may be ſaid, that this ſeverity was us'd only 'againſt groſs and intolerable Opinions, to prevent 'their ſpreading among the People. Well; If this Reaſon be good for them, why not for the preſent Government, eſpecially ſince the Right and Title of it, is ſomewhat clearer than that of the Independant Dominion? That the Opinions then puniſhed were Groſs, and Blaſphemous, alters not the caſe, ſince they were part of the belief, and the Religion of ſeveral Perſons or Sects; and if no forcible means at all ought to be us'd to reduce Mens Conſciences, how come theſe to be excepted?

"However you will ſay for them, that they us'd no "forcible means to make Men Conform againſt

"their

" their Judgment to their way of Worſhip: There is a certain Author, who ſtiles himſelf *a Friend to true Reformation*, and whoſe Teſtimony we have no reaſon to ſuſpect, that aſſures us of the contrary from the Practice of thoſe times. [A Lamentable Repreſentation of the effects of Toleration. By *V. T.* 1656.] This zealous Perſon, to let the Magiſtrate underſtand, *that providing Able, Pious Miniſters, is not all they can do*, tells this ſtory, that a Godly Citizen of *Lon-*" *don*, took to his Apprentice a prophane Country " Lad, (ſome Cavalier-bred Boy belike) and having " ſent him to Church once or twice, *to hear a Soul* " *Searching Miniſter*, (Pardon my Authors Phraſe.) *Alas poor Boy, his Heart was oppoſite to ſuch holy matter, as Praying and Preaching, ſo he would come no more there, but the Maſter thought he had not done enough, but did command and compel him conſtantly to hear that Miniſter, as he thought it was his Duty*, ſo at laſt the Boy was Converted, then he concludes; *What Chriſtian can or will blame this Maſter?* The ſame Author proceeds further to inform us of the Godly Practice of thoſe times. *The Officers of the Army* (ſaies he) *in their Garriſons*, (*I am ſure in* Jamiſes) *do compel their Souldiers to hear the Publick Sermons, all, except ſome Anabaptiſts.—How ſmartly have I ſeen the Souldiers caned unto the Sermon in* Weſtminſter Abby? *It is a good Example for all in Authority, from the greateſt Prince and Parliament, to the meaneſt Maſter or Parent*, it was time now to object, *this is againſt Liberty of Conſcience, no ſuch matter* (replies our Author,) *it is againſt the liberty of being as bad as men will, but not againſt the Liberty of being as good as men will, if neither Anabaptiſt, Preſbyterian,*

rian; nor Independant Miniſter will not ſerve them, their Conſcience is not tender in any ſenſe but ſear'd: A wonderful Liberty of Conſcience, a delicious variety, this is ſufficient to pleaſe the moſt Nice and Faſtidious Palate. And this brings into my mind ſuch another odd choice offer'd to *David*, either to endure ſeven years Famine, or three Months flight before his Enemies, or three days Peſtilence.

Yet after all this, the Independants in *England*, when they were at their greateſt height, being but few compared to the bulk of the Nation, and prevailing only in the Army, and that too by conjunction with other Sectaries, we cannot certainly judge how far they approv'd of Toleration in their hearts. They ſpoke indulgently and moderately of ſeveral Sects, whoſe aſſiſtance they were forc'd to court, and joined with them in a common Defence againſt Presbytery, but there was no alliance at all of Religion, but only of intereſt between them. Therefore as their intereſt varied, ſo did their Judgment ſeem to do concerning tolerating other Sectaries.

In *New England*, where the Independants Reign, and prevail as well by their number as Authority, the caſe is very much altered, between them and the other Sectaries, there they prohibit all other Religions and Churches but their own, *i. e.* there ſhall be no Preaching, no Congregation, no publick Worſhip, but after their way, and of their own approbation. So that an Anabaptiſt, or a Quaker is more at eaſe here, under the moſt active proſecu-

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tion of this Government, than in *New England*, that was once accounted the refuge of the ſcrupulous. But that all men may know how Toleration thrives in that Country, I will mention the Heads of ſome of their Laws concerning Eccleſiaſtical Matters.

1. "*No Church to be gather'd without* the ap-"probation of the Magiſtrate dwelling next, and "of the Elders of the neighbouring Churches.

2. "No perſon to Preach publickly and conſtantly "to any people, either in Church ſociety or not, where any two Organick Churches, Council of ſtate, or General Court ſhall declare their diſſatisfaction thereat, either in reference to doctrine or practice.

3. "Eevery one that Renounces his Church eſtate, "ſhall forfeit to the Treaſury forty Shillings a "month, ſo long as he ſhall continue in that his "obſtinacy.

4. "Every one muſt come to Church upon the "Lords day, days of Humiliation and Thanks-"giving, or for every default to forfeit five Shil-"lings.

5. "The Obſervation of *Chriſmaſs* Day, to be "puniſh'd with a mulckt of five Shillings.

6. Hereſy to be puniſhed by Baniſhment or Death, and many diſputable points determin'd to be Hereſy.

7. Who-

7. Whoſoever ſhall be found to have any of *Muggleton*, or *Reeves* Books, ſhall pay ten pounds, he that Harbours a Quaker ſhall pay forty Shillings an hour, he that ſhall go to their meeting ſhall pay ten Shillings, and the Speaker five pounds.

8. A Quaker is to be baniſhed, and if he return, to be whipp'd out of the Country at a Carts tail, and ſtigmatiz'd, and if he come back a ſecond time, to be put to Death.

9. Anabaptiſts are made incapable of dwelling there by their Law concerning Hereſies, which declar'd it to be one to deny the lawfulneſs of Infant Baptiſm.

I am almoſt afraid that ſome who have not conſidered the difference between a ruling Independant and an Independant under hatches, will be apt to ſuſpect I do them wrong in theſe Citations, but if any be ſo ſcrupulous of believing theſe ſummary excerptions, he may without much difficulty, I believe, ſatisfy himſelf by looking in the Body of Statutes, that they have printed, which will inform him more at large, what liberty of Conſcience is practis'd in New *England*.

But theſe are ſcare-crow Laws ſurely, and never intended to be put in Execution. Alas the complaints of New *England* Perſecution, has made ſo much noiſe this many years, that the whole World has rung with it. R. *Williams* made no little ſtir about

Cottons Bloudy Tenet, and the barbarous uſage he and ſeveral other Diſſenters from the Churches eſtabliſh'd there, had met with. The Caſe of the *Gortoniſts* has been publiſh'd, and it was thought very hard meaſure, that when the Eſtabliſh'd Sect had driven theſe out of their Dominion, to ſeek Protection and Liberty under ſome of the Neighbouring *Indians*, their Perſecutors purſued them thither, and by force of Arms diſlodged them from this Refuge. I need not multiply Inſtances of this kind, all ſorts of Diſſenters there drank of the ſame Cup, and made the ſame Complaints.

Some perhaps may be deſirous to know how the Independants of *New England* can defend themſelves againſt the Arguments of their own Brethren here for Toleration, when they come to be us'd by the Sectaries that diſſent from their Rule; Such as they are put upon us for Demonſtrations, and thought by our Diſſenters unanſwerable; therefore it may not be a miſs to give a brief account how the diſpute runs there, and in what manner the Proſecutors vindicate themſelves againſt the importunate ſaucy Pleas which the Diſſenters there do continually make for Liberty of Conſcience.

Mathers Preface to St Willards *Biſhop againſt the* Anab.

For one Proteſtant Congregation to proſecute another, is more unreaſonable, (ſays the Anabaptiſt Apology) *than all the Cruelty of the Roman Church, Increaſe Mather,* ſays *No*: *For Proteſtants puniſh*, tho not perſecute *Proteſtants*; *nay, as the caſe may be circumſtanc'd, even a Congregation of ſuch*

as

as call themſelves Proteſtants, if he had added *Independants* too, the Antitheſis had been ſomewhat more bold, and more viſible: This he proves by the Authority of the Puritans, from whom theſe Churches pretend to be deſcended; and precious Mr. *Cotton* their Apoſtle, who is bold to denounce, *That if the Magiſtrates of* England, *would tolerate Tranſgreſſours of the Rule of Godlineſs, God would not long tolerate them.*

In England (*ſay the Anabaptiſts*) *the Independants are our Advocates for Toleration, in New* England, *they perſecute us themſelves. p.* 16. "And the "Writers of the Church of *England*, lay hold of "this occaſion to expoſe their inconſiſtence with "themſelves; *Mather* mumbles this Objection, but is not able to take it off: It is *not for their Opinion, but for receiving perſons excommunicated by the Independant Congregation*, that they are puniſhed, but this fault they are as guilty of in Old *England*, as in New *England. Then he cannot be perſwaded that any Independants would deſire indulgence for ſuch Anabaptiſts as theirs.* Yet there can be no difference ſhewn between thoſe that are taken here into protection, and thoſe that are perſecuted there. Whence then can proceed ſo different an uſage of the ſame ſort of men? Alas the myſtery is not very deep, and may be reſolved into a Common Rule of Humane Wiſdom very well known, that it is no matter how liberal a man is at the expence of another; but he ought to be more wary, when he is to give out of his own ſtock.

The Anabaptiſts complain, *That it is againſt the deſign of the firſt Planters, that left* England *and went thither for Liberty of Conſcience*, to lay any reſtraint upon it. *Willard* anſwers without mincing, *That their buſineſs was not Toleration, but to ſettle and ſecure Religion to poſterity, according to that way which they believed was of God.* p. 11. *The Magiſtrates there were Chriſtians, and held it their duty to maintain and ſtrengthen Chriſtian Religion by Civil Laws. All Reformers have done ſo, and the Church ever ſince the Apoſtles.* Poor diſſenting Conſcience, where canſt thou find Reception, if theſe Colonies of Diſſenters ſhut the doors againſt thee?

Animadverſions on the N. E. Anabapt. p. 4.

The Anabaptiſt cry's, *it is againſt their Brethren. p.* 9. The Independant is not ſatisfy'd that they are ſo near of kin, and though they were, *Yet Diſcipline rightly adminiſtred, is not againſt Chriſtian Charity, the want of it does rather argue want of Love,* Lev. 19. 17.

It is the part of the men of this World to perſecute, (ſays the Anabap.) yet ſometimes (replies the Independant) *it proceeds from Godly Zeal againſt Seducers.*

Gentle means will prevail moſt according to the Diſſenters judgment. *p.* 10. *But experience tells the Independant that ſuch a Rough thing as a* New England *Anabaptiſt is not to be handled over-tenderly. The Spirit which they have alwaies diſcovered under the greateſt diſadvantages, eaſily tells us, what they would*

would have been, if circumſtanced as thoſe whom they accuſe. And Laſtly, that they might not be miſunderſtood, they declare the proper Subject of their juriſdiction. *We do not pretend to a Lordſhip over Conſcience, yet the outward man is Subject to us.*

Now he that can reconcile theſe Laws, this practice, this Doctrine of the Independants, to the *Conſideration* for Toleration, may make a match between Antipathies, and a friendſhip between contradictions; nay, may reconcile the Conſcience of a Scotch Covenanter, to that ſhort prayer for which he holds a ſingular deteſtation, *i. e.* God ſave the King, *idem jungat vulpes & mulgeat Hercos.*

The *Anabaptiſts*, *Quakers*, *Socinians*, and other Sects, becauſe they are not particularly mentioned, I cannot tell how far they may be concern'd in this Plea for a general Toleration, or whether they will be judg'd tolerable or no, and therefore it will not be neceſſary to ſay any thing concerning them. And ſince theſe have not yet had the fortune to be uppermoſt in any of our Revolutions, we cannot conclude with any certainty, whether they would continue as zealous for Indulgence as now they are: It being difficult now to diſcern whether their importunity for Toleration proceeds from the Inward Man, or only from their outward Circumſtances. When they had got ſome power in *Cromwels* Army, they began to be ſomewhat turbulent, and addicted to Levelling, which imply'd a very ſore impoſition upon the Conſciences of Rich Men, and thoſe that were

in Authority. But in those Countries where the Anabaptists prevailed upon their first appearing, they left such instances of Blood-shed and Devastation, as the story of no Christian Sect can parallel.

For the *Quakers*, how their Spirit would determine concerning Toleration, if they were in power, is as hard to foretel, as it would be to show, what course, or frolick a mad man would take, that were broke loose from his Keeper. But if all *Bedlam* should break loose, and make themselves the Masters, I believe it would be necessary to have recourse to *Davids* Stratagems, and that a man would be in no little danger, that would presume to continue in the Exercise of his own Wits.

Having shewn what Conscience, they that Dissent from us, make of Indulging their Dissenters, and that none are more vehement against Toleration when they are in place, than those that are now so importunate for it, we may conclude that notwithstanding all they alledge from Scripture, and the nature of Christian Religion, to make us believe that we ought in Conscience to indulge Dissenters, they are of our side, and do not believe any thing of what they say, for it is unconceivable how they can reckon that our Duty, which would not be so to them plac'd in our circumstances.

Now if neither Christ nor his Apostles have ever enjoin'd a general Toleration of all Christian Sects, and the Dissenters, when uppermost, declare this

to

to be true: The Christian Magistrate is something more at large, and has greater liberty and scope to judge of the Reasons and Consequences of allowing or refusing it.

The second Topick from which the D. of B. and the Considerer argue against all Compulsion in matters of Religion, is the absurdity and unreasonableness of the thing: Therefore the D. puts the Question.

2. Topick. *Whether there can be any thing more unmanly, more barbarous or more ridiculous, than to go about to convince a mans judgment by any thing but Reason, it is so ridiculous, that Boys at School are whipp'd for it, who instead of answering an Argument with Reason, are Loggerheads enough to go to Cuffs.*

If this reasoning be good, the Master that Whips is the veryest Loggerhead of all: Has whipping any demonstration in it to convince the judgment of Boys? The Master therefore should convince those Blockheads by a grave discourse, as a certain Reverend Person of great moderation, is said to have done upon the like occasion, saying, That it was the highest absurdity in Metaphysicks for Intellectual or Rational Entities to fall out: Ay, this is convincing, and as certainly parts a fray, as a little dust stops the fury of Bees in the very heat of Battel; for Gods sake tell me, you severe Asserters of *Priscian*, what Rods and Ferula's do in your Schools? What are these Twiggs of the Tree of Knowledge, or these, are they Chips of any Oracular Oak? What can these

theſe things contribute to the enlightning of the underſtanding? Look to your ſelves, for the Aſſertors of humane Reaſon and Liberty, will call you to account, for making uſe of thoſe Enſigns of Tyranny, and Inſtruments of Perſecution; for it is barbarous to go about to convince one's underſtanding, which is true or falſe Latin by any thing but Reaſon; it is ridiculous to imagine that whipping ſhould correct a weak or a miſtaking judgment.

But Boys are perverſe and wilful, and will not be perſuaded to their Duty by Reaſon, therefore Diſcipline muſt be us'd, not to convince their judgments, but to mend their temper, and to bring them to a Teachable Diſpoſition; be it ſo: Now if Men may be ſometimes Children in the temper of their minds, as well as in underſtanding, what ſhall be done? If they are Perverſe, Sullen, Raſh, Wanton, to ſay nothing of Malice, Intereſt, Deſign, which are more than childiſh faults, is there no remedy but downright Reaſon? And yet theſe Indiſpoſitions will not permit the party affected, to hearken to, or to conſider, or comply with Reaſon, but when theſe Obſtructions are remov'd, reaſon may have its effect, and finiſh the Conviction.

Yet ſtill, *to go about to convince a mans judgment by any thing but Reaſon, is unmanly*, &c. It is certainly ſo: And an unmannerly Fellow might ſay, that if his Grace means to convince any mans judgment, by this Quere of the reaſonableneſs of Toleration, he may be in danger of falling under his own Cenſure. But to the Queſtion, I do not believe we ever had

had a Parliament ſo unlearned, as to take Penal Laws for Demonſtrations, or to think that any puniſhment can immediately convince the underſtanding. Penalties in matters of Religion are deſign'd to remove ſuch evil obſtructions as lie in the Paſſage to a mans right Reaſon, that it may judge more equally and impartially of that which is laid before it. Every mans reaſon is not to be ſpoken with at all times, there may be Prejudice, Wilfulneſs, or Intereſt, that like ſo many ſurly Door-keepers, forbid all acceſs to right reaſon; they will ſay perhaps, my Lord is indiſpoſed, or he is in Company, or entertains himſelf with a private Friend, or is a ſleep, and muſt not be moleſted; ſo an ordinary Perſon muſt depart, tho' his buſineſs be never ſo reaſonable; but if an Officer from the King ſhall demand Audience, all excuſes vaniſh, the Doors fly open to the Authority, that would not ſtir before the Juſtice of the ſame Meſſage, and the great Perſon ſo difficult to be approach'd, muſt then hearken to, and comply with Reaſon; if therefore the Penalties which cannot convince the judgment, may yet reſcue it from the ſluggiſhneſs, and teachleſneſs it had contracted, and from that Slavery in to which the will and paſſions its own natural Subjects had reduc'd it, and reſtore it to the liberty of conſidering the Reaſons laid before it; every reaſonable man I hope will be ready to diſcharge them of the infamous Titles given them in this Quere.

Conſ. 4 *The good Rules of Humanity and Common Civility, are openly violated by uſing of Force in Matters of Conſcience. Men do abhor to thruſt that Meat or*

Drink down their Neighbours Throat, that will not agree with their Stomachs; they ſay commonly pray take what likes you, why are they not ſo civil in Matters of Religion, have compaſſion one on another, be Pitiful, be Courteous.

If it were as indifferent a matter, what Religion or Sect one ſhould be of, as whether he ſhould eat Beef or Mutton, I muſt confeſs it would be very unhoſpitable to oblige a man to any one more than another. But I have not heard before of this new mode of Civility, pray take what God or Religion you pleaſe, I will not preſcribe to you, be of what Sect you pleaſe. Yet if in this variety there ſhould be any thing that you knew to be unwholſom or mortal, it would be but a ſorry civility not to forbid him to touch it, or not to ſnatch it forcibly out of his hands. Or if by miſtake one ſhould eat Hemlock, and declare he did not love Oyl, it could not ſurely be accounted ſo very Rude and Barbarous, to pour ſome down his throat. But it goes againſt their ſtomachs: So does many Medicines that have good effect. The Phyſicians muſt not uſe Aloes, or Rhubarb, becauſe they make one ſick forſooth, in the way to health, but the Chymiſt and the Quack cry, be kind to nature; Let your Medicines be comfortable and eaſy. Indulgence is the only way to heal: After all this, what ſhall we ſay to the concluding Text of Scripture. *Have compaſſion one of another*, &c. Is it not a very tender compaſſion, ſo to ſuffer a man to go on undiſturb'd in damnable errour? Is it not a moſt obliging Courteſy, to ſuffer a man to dye, rather than uſe ſo much rudeneſs as to

to pull him by the Noſe? St. *Jude* has left us another ſort of direction, he bids us to make a difference, and to ſnatch ſome out of the fire, but according to our Conſiderers courteſy, we muſt have a care of being too rough with them, leſt while we ſnatch them out of the fire, we ſhould happen to hurt them, or put out an Arm.

Conſi 5. *The Church Proteſtants in* England *have been diſtreſſed by hot doings heretofore in the Reign of Queen* Mary, *when they were accounted Criminals for not conforming to that Worſhip which was then the eſtabliſhed Worſhip of the Kingdom. And they ſhould have taken heed before now, of what they did, and of what Spirit they be ſtill of in perſecuting others, ſince they know not how ſoon that part of the Wheel which has been, or is on the ground, may come to be at top, and fall the heavier on them upon this account; for with the ſame meaſure men mete withal, it ſhall be meted to them again.*

If ever I underſtood the juſt reproach of a *Trimmer*, it is ſomething of kin to this Argument, it is the name, as I take it, of one that dares not be honeſt, and do his duty for fear of Conſequences. What if the Parliament ſhould be angry? What if there ſhould be a Court Revolution? What if the Faction ſhould get the better? So he floats, and rowls, and reciprocates, as this or that apprehenſion prevails: How politick this conſideration may be, does not much concern me, let the Author abound in his own wiſdom, and diſtant projects of ſelf preſervation, the

preſent Queſtion is, What is fit and ought to be done, and not what will come of it; and beſides the iſſue of this conſideration is very uncertain, for there may be Inconveniences in the way of forbearance, as well as in that of ſeverity. If you provoke a Party, the Wheel may turn round, and they have their turn of being uppermoſt, and then will be in a capacity of revenging themſelves. If you tolerate and give way to Diſſenters, you contribute to their Growth, and with your own hands help the Wheel to turn round, and when they are got to the Top, they may forget all your former connivances. There is no end of purſuing the conſequences of things that have ſuch variety of chance, and are influenced by every little incident; the wiſeſt way ſurely is for a man to be uniform to himſelf to do his duty, and leave the ſucceſs to God: I cannot tell how ſeaſonable it may be to put people in mind at this time of Queen *Marys* daies. Thoſe that can aquieſce in the faith and juſtice of a King, who has been alwaies ſo faithful a Subject to his own word, can no more apprehend *the hot doings* of thoſe times would return, than that the time it ſelf ſo long paſs'd ſhould be recall'd: But there are Conſciences as full of fears and jealouſies of perſecution for, as they are of ſcruples in their Religion, and condemn themſelves never to be ſatisfy'd. This is not very ſtrange, for it is natural for every man to hope and fear according as he has deſerved.

I wonder our Author ſhould give himſelf the trouble to go ſo far back as Queen *Marys* Reign, to

to humble the *Church Proteſtants*, with a proſpect of their ſufferings, he might have found a Revolution no leſs calamitous to them, and of a more freſh and ſmarting Remembrance; I mean the *Reign of the Diſſenters*. The *Church Proteſtants* are ſenſible enough, that they are mortal, and have had their turns of ſuffering as well as others. But it is ſomewhat an odd way of moving for Indulgence, to commemorate the inſolence or cruelty, which thoſe that pretend to favour, have heretofore us'd towards the Church that is eſtabliſh'd by Law, and it ſounds like a threat to ſuggeſt, you know what you have ſuffered, therefore, *take heed how you proſecute others*. Who are theſe others? Diſſenters? Why ſhould the intimation of Queen *Marys* days, make us take ſuch heed of that? If thoſe times ſhould return, it is not likely that the Proſecution of Diſſenters, would be laid to our charge as Hereſy, or *Roman Catholicks*. The Diſſenters of all men living, have the leaſt reaſon to reproach us with proſecuting theſe, ſince they were the conſtant Inſtigators of the Magiſtrate to execute the Laws made againſt the Papiſts, and upon all occaſions expoſed the *Church-Proteſtants*, as Popiſhly affected, becauſe they did not always proſecute that Party with the uttermoſt rigour: But if our danger cannot prevail with us to take heed of proſecuting, yet ſurely our Saviours admonition muſt: *With what meaſure you mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again*. If the meaſure be juſt and reaſonable, why ſhould we fear that the ſame ſhould be returned; If the return be not juſt, then it is not the ſame meaſure. The Judges had need to underſtand this place better than our Conſiderer, otherwiſe they would have but a ſorry defence

defence to make if the Criminals they had puniſh'd, ſhould come to make reprizals, and to judge them by this Text, according to the intent of this *Conſideration.*

Conſi. 6. *Conformiſts and Non-Conformiſts, do all agree in the ſubſtance of Chriſtianity, in the ſame Articles of Faith, in the ſame Rule of Manners, in the Apoſtles Creed, and the ten Commandments. There is one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one Fleſh, one Baptiſme. As a variety of flowers may grow on one Bank, ſo may Proteſtants and Papiſts live in* England, &c. *There is much more reaſon to love one another for the many things wherein we agree, than to fall out for thoſe wherein we differ, and though we cannot have Communion in the ſame external Worſhip, we can, and have Communion in the ſame internal Adoration of the ſame Bleſſed Trinity,* &c. *The Wolf ſhall lye down with the Lamb,* &c.

It is an intolerable iniquity, to uſe different and deceitful weights, one ſort to buy, and another to ſell by. It is the ſame ſort of cheat, to repreſent things of more or leſs moment, not as they are in themſelves, but only according to the occaſion we have to make uſe of them. When Diſſenters ſpeak of Toleration, then we agree all in the main, the differences are only about ſmall matters, and why ſhould not we indulge ſomething to leſſer miſtakes? But if you deſire them to take this Argument back by the ſame weight, and tell them, that ſince we agree in the main, why ſhould they be

be ſo unreaſonable as to ſeparate from us, and to make or continue a perpetual breach for things of little moment? then they preſently change their note, and every difference is of the higheſt importance, *i. e.* Whatſoever they would have us to grant, is but a ſlight matter; But for them to yield any of thoſe little things, is as much, as to renounce the Faith, or to Sacrifice to an Idol.

Now let us obſerve the truth and conſequence of what is offer'd in this *Conſideration, all do agree as to the ſubſtance of Chriſtianity, and in the ſame Articles.* In what ſubſtance? In what Articles? In all? This is too much, for we have ſome difference I think with the *Roman* Catholicks about the infallibility of their Church, the Supremacy of the Pope, the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, and theſe they take *to be Articles of Faith, and of the ſubſtance of Religion*; and we judge to be miſtakes very abſurd, and of long and dangerous conſequences; *But we have the ſame Apoſtles Creed*; So we have the ſame Scripture, yet if they lay yet broader Foundations, and build upon it what Faith they pleaſe, how ſhall theſe their Creed or Scripture ever determine any difference about thoſe Additional Articles, or what Plea is it for Indulgence, that we agree in many points, but that we differ in other of great importance; as if an Argument concerning the obligation of nine of the Commandments, ſhould be a reaſon to permit the obſervation of the tenth to diſcretion, and that we ſhould rather conſider the many Commandments about which we agreed, than one or two, perhaps ſhort ones, which

ſome

ſome tender Conſciences might deſire to be indulg'd. The *Socinians* and we differ about the Perſon of Chriſt, and the Merit of his death, about the Doctrine of the Trinity, and many things more of leſs moment; but theſe things ſurely were ever accounted of the ſubſtance of Chriſtianity, and yet they make a difference between us and the *Socinians*: The *Quakers* who reſolve all their Faith into the Authority of their Spirit, and revile the Scripture, and deny it to be the Word of God, do not agree with us ſo much as in the Foundation of Religion; theſe two err dangerouſly concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Son of God, and I am afraid our Author did not conſider theſe Sects, when he tells us; *That we can, and have Communion in the ſame Internal Adoration of the ſame Bleſſed Trinity.* I cannot tell to what purpoſe our Author brings into this conſideration a paſſage of Scripture about Unity, where he pleads for the Eſtabliſhment of Diviſion; *There is one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm.* Since ſeveral of the Diſſenters have neither the ſame *Faith*, nor *Baptiſm*, much leſs the ſame Body or Spirit; The Anabaptiſts look upon our Baptiſm as void; The *Quakers* and *Socinians* for the moſt part, uſe no Baptiſm at all: Now I would fain underſtand by what figure of Speech, theſe may be ſaid to have the ſame Baptiſm with us? Well; admit there be ſome things of moment, about which we differ, yet the number of thoſe is greateſt about which we are agreed, therefore, *there is much more reaſon to love one another, for the many things wherein we agree, than for to fall out for thoſe wherein we differ.* Whether we ought to love one another for thoſe things in which we agree, is not the queſtion; for it is certain

certain we ought to love one another, whether we agree in many things or few, but the point in diſpute is whether this love obliges us to permit thoſe that differ from us, to Confirm themſelves in thoſe errors, which are the occaſion of our difference, by having them Preach'd and Argu'd, and Maintain'd in their Aſſemblies; Is it an Act of Chriſtian Charity, to ſuffer *Quakers* to enjoy all opportunities of being confirm'd in their madneſs, and of ſeducing ſilly people? If we love the Perſon of a *Socinian*, muſt we therefore give him leave to propagate his Doctrine, and to teach men to deny their Lord that bought them? becauſe we have Charity for *Anabaptiſts*, ought we therefore to Tolerate them to Re-baptize thoſe they have ſeduc'd to believe themſelves no Chriſtians, or the *Independants*, becauſe our Faith is not much different from theirs? ſhall they out of pure love be licens'd to gather Select Congregations, to draw away as many as they can from the Church, to oblige them by a Vow as Solemn as that of Baptiſm, not to return thither, nor to forſake their new Fraternity?

Theſe are the things which we would gladly have the Diſſenters forbear, and uſe all lawful means to hinder them, not becauſe we have no love for them, but out of pure compaſſion, becauſe theſe things they are ſo deſirous to be indulg'd in, would do them and others hurt, and this is all the quarrel we have with them, this is the falling out with which our Author is offended.

What ſhall we ſay now to the *Mahomitan* Parable? *That variety of Flowers may grow on the ſame Bank.*

It is certainly more agreeable to the Principles of him that ſpoke it, than thoſe of a Chriſtian, for the *Turks* permit *Jews* and *Chriſtians* to live among them, and to enjoy the Exerciſe of their Religion, becauſe they think both of them may be ſav'd by vertue of that Religion they reſpectively profeſs. But our Church paſſes a very ſevere Cenſure upon thoſe that ſhall ſay, that every man may be ſav'd by that Law or Sect which he profeſſes. But what if theſe Flowers prove Weeds, and grow too faſt, what if they annoy, and hurt the reſt, what if they are like Flowers *de Luce* ill Neighbours according to the Old Proverb, what then? They muſt certainly in prudence be a little diſcouraged and kept under, or by ſome good Art be brought to change their deſtructive and unſortable nature.

In what manner this Prophecy of the Reconciliation of Diſſenting Natures, *The Wolf ſhall lye down with the Lamb, and the Leopard with the Kid*, is to be accompliſh'd, I am not well aſſur'd, however I have ſome reaſon to ſuſpect, that it is not to be done by the way of an univerſal Toleration, becauſe this deſcription ſhews not only, that they ſhall not hurt one the other, but that they ſhall be of one Fellowſhip and Communion; they ſhall feed and lye down together; whereas Toleration ſeems to do no more than to ſhut up theſe ſeveral Creatures in diſtinct apartments of the ſame Grate; but if you would know when a Presbyterian, or Independant, or Anabaptiſt, will not hurt, I can tell, without the Spirit of Prophecy, it is then only when they have no power to do hurt.

Conſ. 7. *The* French *Proteſtants, who are Diſſenters from the Eſtabliſh'd Government of that Kingdom, are kindly receiv'd and ſuccour'd by* England, *and when the* French *King is highly blam'd by* Engliſh *Proteſtants, and perhaps too by ſome* Engliſh *Catholicks, for Perſecuting his peaceable Subjects, ſhall we do the ſame thing in our Kingdom, which we condemn in another? Therefore thou art inexcuſable O Man that judgeſt, for thou that judgeſt another, doeſt the ſame thing.*

I will not enquire what *Engliſh* Proteſtants do highly blame or condemn the Actions of the *French* King; thoſe of my acquaintance are not very forward to cenſure and condemn Princes, nor can it be concluded, that whoſoever is kind to a Stranger forc'd out of his Countrey, does preſently engage himſelf in the whole Merit of his Cauſe. But as for the *French* Proteſtants, we conceive our compaſſion to be the more due to them, becauſe they ſuffer for a Religion, which we verily believe to be true, which we are not able to ſay of ſeveral of thoſe that plead for Toleration. In the next place, they were peaceable, and had not provok'd their Prince by any Seditious or Turbulent Behaviour, in the Minority of this King, when the diſcontents of *France* were very high, and the Authority of the Government low. They behav'd themſelves ſo well as to deſerve his publick acknowledgment, which I believe our Diſſenters are too modeſt to pretend to; for if they ſhould; yet there is hardly any body ſo ignorant of their proceedings, but can juſtly reproach them

with having laid hold on every advantage of publick diſtreſs, to weaken firſt, then to deſtroy the Government: They never fail'd to join themſelves with every Faction againſt the Crown, and ſtill brought a form'd Faction to every diſcontented great Man, and offer'd themſelves ready inſtruments of his Ambition or Revenge. But we have yet farther cauſe to Commiſerate the ſufferings of the *French* Proteſtants, becauſe they tell us, and we have no reaſon to disbelieve them, that they were inflicted without Proceſs or Form of Law, and directly againſt particular Rights and Priviledges granted to them by former Kings.

For their Churches had been long ago taken into the protection of the Government, and eſtabliſh'd by Laws. Special Judicatures were erected in their favour, where the one half were of their Religion, and ſeveral other Priviledges granted them, to ſecure their perſons and eſtates from Oppreſſion, and the malice of their Enemies; and how they have forfeited all, I do not know. But our Proteſtant Diſſenters were never own'd by our Laws, nor mentioned in them, but as a factious and ſeditious Party, that was by all due means to be ſuppreſs'd. There never was any agreement or accomodation between the Government and them; for while they could hold their arms in their hands, they would never hearken to any, and therefore it is no wonder if we have ſo many Laws againſt Diſſenters, to forbid Conventicles, to oblige them to come to Church; ſince this Government thought they could never take too great ſecurity, from a Party they

they had found to be implacable. *Therefore thou art inexcuſable O man*, whoever thou art, that wouldſt ſtir up the Reader, nay recommend to the Parliament for a Parellel Caſe with ours, one that has ſo little reſemblance with it.

Top. 3. We are come now to the third and laſt Topick of the Advocates for Toleration, and that is the benefit and advantage of the Kingdom, by Improvement of Trade, to which Indulgence is eſteem'd to be ſo ſingular a Nurſe, that it cannot poſſibly thrive or ſubſiſt without it. Wherefore the D. of B. makes this Quere, *Whether the practice of it, i. e.* of uſing any compulſion or reſtraint towards mens Conſciences, *has not alwaies been ruinous and deſtructive to thoſe Countreys, where it has been us'd either in Monarchies or Common-wealths? and whether the contrary practice has not been ſucceſsful in all thoſe Countreys, where it has been us'd, either in Monarchies or Common-wealths?*

We have great obligation to this Noble Perſon, for waving all the advantages which a fruitful wit might have given him upon this Subject, of reaſoning without end of the poſſible or probable miſchiefs or advantages ariſing to Monarchies or Common-wealths, from the granting or refuſing Toleration; and for referring this whole diſpute to the deciſion of experience. The Queſtion therefore cannot but have an eaſy iſſue, becauſe any man of ordinary underſtanding, that has read ſome Hiſtory,

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or made any Obſervation in the World, may be capable of deciding it. As to the firſt part of the demand I do believe there have been, and are ſeveral Kingdoms that have receiv'd no manner of damage, by denying a Toleration to ſeveral Religions. What Calamity has befallen *Denmark* or *Sweden* upon this account, where you will meet with no other Churches, but the *Lutherans* and if ſome Indulgence has been heretofore offered there to People of other Nations, this comes not under our Queſtion, for ſtrangers may be more ſafely tolerated than Subjects, becauſe the removal of them, when they grew troubleſome is more eaſy, and has not ſo bad conſequence. But not to Travel ſo far for an exception to this General Quære, I beleive there was no Kingdom more flouriſhing than this was under Queen *Elizabeth* and King *James* I. And yet then there was as great or greater reſtraint upon Conſcience, as at any time ſince: The *Roman* Catholicks, though a very numerous and formidable Party in the beginning of the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, were brought to our Churches, by the ſingle force of the Act of Uniformity, which left Diſſenters to the Cenſures of the Church, and added no other puniſhment than a light mulct of a Shilling for every default. And this Uniformity that is the Contradiction of Toleration, did in a few years ſo diminiſh that Party, that the Pope was oblig'd to command thoſe who retain'd any reverence for his Authority, to ſeparate themſelves, and to abſtain from coming to our Churches: It would have been a ſtrange Paradox in Politicks, in thoſe daies, to plead

plead for the Toleration of thoſe the Government did ſo much fear. But however, this Compulſion did not prove in the leaſt *ruinous*, or deſtructive to this Kingdom: And when that Party fell into dangerous enterprizes, the Laws grew ſtill more and more ſevere, in obliging them to a conformity with the eſtabliſh'd Religion.

The Puritans were as little indulg'd by that Queen, as the Papiſts, as her Laws do ſufficiently declare, and all her time by due execution of Laws; that Faction was low and inconſiderable, that the care taken then to ſuppreſs them, ſeemed to proceed rather from the foreſight of ſuch troubles, as this Faction might create to ſucceeding Princes, than any apprehenſion of preſent danger. I need not mention thoſe Anabaptiſts, and wild Fanaticks, that were put to death in her time, not ſo much I conceive for matters of Religion, as crimes againſt the State, it is enough that all the World knows, that there was no Toleration in thoſe daies, and yet they were as ſerene, as proſperous, as happy, as any paſs'd over the head of this Nation, at leaſtwiſe during the late Uſurpation, which was the only time of Toleration in this Kingdom.

If we can give any credit to thoſe Obſervations, which our Republicans and Diſſenters have made of the Original of the late Confuſions, we owe them all to a pretended Toleration, or ſome ſecret Connivance which they ſuſpected, and from this root they deduce all that followed; true or falſe, real

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or pretended; the Enemies of the Government made much more advantage of it, than either the Government, or those for whom the favour was said to be intended.

I might instance in Monarchy's, and Commonwealths of the *Roman* Communion, that are of Opinion, that they have received no great prejudice by not granting a Toleration for all Sects of Religion; and if some of the most zealous Persecutors of the Reformation have fallen into extraordinary decay, we may impute it to the Judgment of God upon them for resisting the Truth with so great Cruelty, and not for denying licence to every thing or Sect, that had the pretence or Cant of Religion. Besides in those Countreys, some that have inquired into the reasons of their decay, have observed several other false measures, much more pernicious than the denying of Toleration.

The last Exception I shall make is from the Common-wealth and Kingdom of the *Jews*, which never flourish'd more than when there was no Toleration, never was in worse Condition, than when there was; And this instance has something more of Authority than the rest, because this People were govern'd by Gods own Laws, and sometime more immediately by God himself as it were in Person, and yet during all the time of his Theocracy, there is not the least Indulgence or Liberty of Conscience to be found upon Record.

Nay, so far was his Government from any such thing, that he made a perpetual Decree, that if any Person,

Perſon, or City, or Tribe, ſhould fall away from his Worſhip, and ſerve other Gods, the reſt inſtead of Indulging, or neglecting the errors, were to proſecute them to utter deſtruction.

Now, leſt it may be thought, that under Theocracy this might be juſt, becauſe Idolatry was a ſort of High Treaſon, but in other Governments the reaſon ceaſes; it is plain that the ſame Law was put in Execution by the Kings of *Iſrael* and *Judah*; who are not only commended by the inſpir'd Writers, but obſerved to have been bleſs'd with unuſual proſperity for thoſe proſecutions. I would not be thought to recommend theſe Proceedings, as Precedents to be tranſcrib'd by Chriſtian Princes, it is only upon the Queſtion of Fact, that I produce this inſtance, to ſhew there may be ſuch a thing as a proſperous Kingdom or Common Wealth, without the help of a general Toleration.

As to the ſecond part of the Quere; *Has not the contrary practice been always ſucceſsful to thoſe Countries where it has been us'd, either in Monarchies or Common Wealths.* I think it a hard matter to find many Kingdoms or Common Wealths, where a general Toleration has been us'd; ſome have endur'd one, or perhaps two ſorts of Diſſenters in Religion, but this does not anſwer the end of thoſe Queres, or of the *Conſiderations*, *which is univerſal Toleration*; but have not thoſe been moſt ſucceſsful that have tolerated moſt? This is not certain, for I think in the time of the late Uſurpation, there was a great variety of Sects permitted to uſe their ſeveral ways, but the ſucceſs, God be thanked, was ſuch as honeſt men did wiſh and pray for; they had

too great ſucceſs indeed at firſt againſt the King and the Church, but then Toleration was ſcarce begun or deſign'd; there was then but one Rule of Uniformity, the Covenant was impos'd upon all; And the Independants did for a good while diſſemble their Exceptions. But afterwards when every Sect demanded the liberty of its own way, and Religions were multiply'd beyond Computation, the Fruits of Toleration did quickly appear, every Sect as it gather'd a little ſtrength from a State of Toleration began to affect Dominion, and this did quickly ſo diſunite, and rend the Body of thoſe Tyrants, that it was impoſſible for them longer to ſubſiſt, and ſo made way to that glorious Revolution, whoſe influence makes us ſtill happy and proſperous, and it makes no difference in this caſe, whether a Government be rightful or uſurp'd; the ſame method of Indulgence will have the ſame conſequence, only Uſurpers have more excuſe for allowing Toleration, becauſe it is more neceſſary for them, than for a Rightful and long Eſtabliſh'd Dominion; and therefore tho' it be a dangerous courſe, they muſt take it, becauſe they have no better to take.

I know the Example of the United Privinces is often Recommended by our Diſſenters, and is mentioned by the Authour of the *Conſiderations*, and indeed it equally ſerves both their occaſions, for a Common Wealth, and Toleration; however, I believe this inſtance is commonly ſwallow'd down whole without conſidering the particular reaſons or circumſtances that may induce them to tolerate ſome Religions, which may render their caſe very different from ours. *Some Religions*, I ſay, becauſe they do not tolerate all, or whatever they do at this time, they have been in

in the memory of man so far from allowing an Universal Toleration, that they exceeded all their Protestant Neighbours in violence and severity, against those that dissented from their Establish'd Religion, tho' in matters very obscure, and of insuperable difficulty. However, since this Example of the *Dutch*, is insisted upon by all the Advocates for Toleration, as an unanswerable Argument of the benefit of that course, I will give a brief account of such circumstances, as determined them to Indulgence, and the security they take against all the civil consequences of it; neither of which are to be found in our Government.

In the first place, their Common Wealth was Originally made up of several Religions, or Sects, which are as essential parts of their Constitution, for they were not only preserv'd by Strangers from *England*, and *France*, and *Germany*, that Fought their Battels, but many out of *Germany* and *France*, fled thither as to a common refuge; and were all as it were incorporated into this Common Wealth; every one of these Nations had their Churches not only tolerated, but Establish'd by Authority, and paid by the Government; so every Nation and Sect, use their own Forms and Languages, only the *English* are much degenerated, partly by their own fault, inclining to the Puritan way, and accommodating themselves to the manner of the Country, partly by the care which the *Dutch* do, and have ever us'd to discourage Episcopal Ministers, making great scruple of admitting any one they suspect to have Episcopal Ordination. So Toleration was at first the necessity, not the choice of that People. But after this Establishment,

the measure of their Toleration being full, whoever oppos'd the Religion Establish'd, and departed from the Rule of their Church, found but very sorry quarter. When the *Socinians* appear'd first in those Countries, the States took the Alarm, and Banish'd those Hereticks out of all their Dominions. Then *Arminius* his Scholars, presum'd to find fault with the *Dutch* Catechism, which was their Establish'd Doctrine of their Church, and to divide Communion upon it; they were condemned by the Synod of *Dort*, and the Sentence was Executed by the Magistrate, with so great severity, that all the Neighbouring Countries were fill'd with the complaint of the suffering Remonstrants. The most Eminent and Active of whom were forced to fly their Country, or to endure close Imprisonment at home, so that, tho' they had more different Religions in their first Constitution than we, yet they endeavour'd, we see, to keep their first Establishment entire, as well as we do ours, by forcibly suppressing those that assaulted it; nay, they us'd greater severities upon this occasion towards their Dissenters, than ever we have done to ours. Yet during this prosecution of Dissenters, they had the best success that ever happened to that Common Wealth; before that time they struggl'd for life, but now they enlarg'd their Frontiers and their Trade, and advanc'd so far in strength and reputation, as to become the most powerful Common Wealth in *Europe*; not that their success and prosperity is to be imputed to this Persecution, but it seems by this instance, that forcible means in matters of Conscience does not always ruin, nor is the good success of a People in Trade or War always to be imputed to a general

general Toleration. I do not pretend to juſtify thoſe proceedings, nor do I alledge them upon any other account, than to ſhew that *Dutch* Toleration, has bounds, and that they have been proſperous while they proſecuted, a very conſiderable Party, both for number and intereſt, upon the account of Religion.

But beſides the difference of their firſt Conſtitution, and ours, there are ſeveral other circumſtances in their Government, that renders Toleration leſs dangerous to them than it is to us.

1. The *Dutch* Populace have no voice at all in chuſing of their Magiſtrates; there are neither Mayors, nor Aldermen, nor Sheriffs, nor Common Council, nor Knights and Burgeſſes for Parliament, to be Elected by their Commonalty. There are no Juries to Judge of Matter of Fact, or of Right by way of Concomitance, in any Cauſes Criminal or Civil. So that tho' the number of any Sect may increaſe, yet has it but very little influence upon the Government, ſince it can have no hand in diſpoſing of Publick Offices; nor are the Members of it capable of any, whereas no Sect can thrive with us, but you preſently find the evil effect of it in our Parliaments, in our Juries, and conſequently in all the diſtribution of Juſtice, and eſpecially in the Government, and temper of our Corporations.

2. As the People have no part in the choice of their Magiſtrates, ſo neither can any one be admitted to any part of their Government, who is not of the

the States Religion, and this to appear not by any ſingle Teſt, as once coming to Church, or Receiving of the Sacrament in order to be qualify'd, but by the courſe of their Life, ſo that if any Perſon have given any ſuſpition to that Colledge of Magiſtrates, into which he is ambitious to be received, that he is not in his Heart of their Religion, there is no more hopes of his ſucceeding, than that a Perſon ſhould be made Pope, who is under imputation of Hereſie.

3. It is ſaid, that the Government of their Cities have a more abſolute and ſummary way of Proceeding with Perſons ſuſpected of any deſign or practice, to the prejudice of the publick quiet, and thoſe oblique and ſquinting diſcourſes, and practices of Sedition, that can ſcarce give matter to an Information with us, are there eaſily ſuppreſs'd by an admonition, for ſuch Perſons to depart the place.

4. The temper of the People is ſomething more Phlegmatick and leſs zealous than ours; the ſeveral Sects are content with following their Trade all the Week, and their Religion on *Sunday*, without troubling their Heads with gaining *Proſelytes*, or adding to their numbers, whereas with us every Sectary, almoſt, is a kind of Apoſtle, and is in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, ſtill Preaching up his own way, and practizing upon all thoſe with whom he has to do, and railing againſt what is uppermoſt.

Now the Diſſenters who magnify beyond meaſure, the happineſs of the *Dutch* in the uſe of a General Toleration, would be very loath to purchaſe it at

at the ſame rate, that is, by reſigning up for that Liberty of Conſcience, all ſuch Liberties and Priviledges of Engliſhmen, whereby they are made capable of giving diſturbance to the Government. I am affraid there would be many Diſſenters found upon the Tryal very unwilling for a licence to go to Conventicles; to forbear going to Elections of Parliament Men; and to oblige themſelves not to go to the *Guild-Hall*, provided they be excuſed for not going to Church.

Yet after all, the *Dutch* Toleration has one poſſible diſadvantage, and that a heavy one, that ſeeing there are ſome Sects now tolerated, almoſt as numerous as that Party of the Eſtabliſh'd Religion, ſome of theſe either by Domeſtick Tumult, or Forreign ſupport, may eſtabliſh themſelves in the place of thoſe who are now in Authority, and by putting out a ſmall number of men, now in Government, not only make themſelves Maſters of it, but maintain and keep it by the number and ſtrength they have already; and which will more and more encreaſe by the Acceſſion of thoſe whoſe Religion is gain, of which ſort that Country has its ſhare. Whereas in thoſe Countries where there are indeed ſeveral Religions, if the Diſſenters are ſo kept under as to bear no proportion to thoſe of the Eſtabliſhment, though they may make a Tumult, or get the better for ſome little time by the advantage of a ſurprize, yet will they never be able to maintain themſelves, and muſt give way to the Reſtauration of the firſt Eſtabliſhment.

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The Conſiderator is very particular upon this Topick, and does not only tell us that proſecuting of Diſſenters deſtroys Trade, but inſtances in ſome Proſecutions of ſo ill conſequence, that the King and Council were forc'd to over-rule them, or elſe vaſt multitudes of Poor People, who were not any ways infected with the Opinions of Diſſenters, muſt have been undone.

Conſ. 8. *Proſecuting Diſſenters* (he ſaies) *is a great diſadvantage to the Trade of the Kingdom, they being a chief Part of the Trading People, and conſequently Liberty of Conſcience, muſt be the moſt effectual means to reſtore it.*

I have good reaſon to believe that our Author over-reckons, when he makes the Diſſenters *a chief Part of the Traders*: For though they conſiſt chiefly of Trades-men, and thoſe of the ſmaller ſort, yet they are but an inconſiderable Part in reſpect of the whole. And we muſt note, that all are not Diſſenters out of Conſcience, that ſpeak favourably of their Party, or favour them in a Vote; and it is not unlikely, but that an equal Execution of the Laws, might diſcover to us a great ſecret, that the twentieth Part of thoſe who are reputed for Diſſenters, do not ſtand in need of a Toleration; what our Conſiderer ſaies of *reſtoring of Trade*, is to ſuggeſt that it is decay'd, whereas it is notoriouſly known, that it never was at a greater height in this Kingdom, than it is at preſent. But when Diſſenters talk of deadneſs of Trade, you muſt underſtand, that the true meaning is only that they are diſcontented, and would

would fain make others ſo dow, and becauſe they have no reaſon, or dare not tell the true one, venture the ſhame of the World, by uſing a pretence that is notoriouſly falſe.

The Relation that follows of a cloathier, that was forc'd to leave his Trade and Habitation; and to leave the Poor People he employed upon the Pariſh, and of others of the ſame Trade, that combind to buy no Wool, and to abuſe the Country, to be reveng'd of the Laws, I dare not vouch for true; But ſhould they be all true, which is a very great rarity in the Reports of that Party, I know not what to ſay, but who can help it? Suppoſe that cloathier had broke, for Diſſenters are frail and breakable as other men, and the Poor Workmen had gone a begging. It is a ſad Caſe you will ſay ſo many People ſhould be undone by a ſcurvy Law, that proſecutes men for paying of Debts, or ſuppoſe the man had dy'd, ſome Remedy muſt have been found, and ſome other means to maintain theſe Poor People, there might be more of the Trade that would have been glad of the opportunity of ſucceeding him, for the ſullen men, that abus'd the Country, by combining not to buy, I think they deſerved little favour upon that account, and in ſhort upon this whole vapour of Trade, as if it were wedded only to Diſſenters, it has been anſwered long ago, and thoſe that threatn'd to withdraw their ſtocks were deſir'd, to make their words good, and the King ſufficiently aſſur'd, that the General Trade of the Kingdom ſhould not ſuffer the leaſt diminution, though no one Diſſenter were concern'd in it. However it was then, it is very well known now, that there is a great deal more money in this Kingdom than can be employ'd

in Trade, and we are so far from being in a Condition that obliges us to Court men to proceed in trading, that the laying down of Trade, is like the laying down of an Office, men are not only courted to it, but brib'd and bought to make room for those who are as it were shut out of the Exchange, by the extraordinary throng that is within.

Consi. 9. Our Consideratour transcribes several passages of late his Majesties Declaration from *Breda*, and some other out of Speeches since his Restauration, I will not take upon me too answer them, but remit the Reader to those Reasons of the House of Commons, which satisfyed the King himself, so far as to pass the act of uniformity without any regard had to the Dissenters, the Declaration for indulgence set forth some years after, upon better Consideration was revok'd by the King, but no Council or Parliament were ever able to convince him so fully of the Reason of putting the Laws in Execution, against Dissenters, as the Dissenters themselves, who made at last such returns of insolence and sedition, for all his indulgence, that he was forc'd for the preservation of himself and his Government, to call for the assistance of those Laws, and to order them to be put in effectual Execution, and we owe it wholy to his wisdom and fore-sight, that some of the most considerable of them are now in being, I mean that of the 35th of Queen *Elizabeth*, which he saved by his Prerogative Law, as well as men when it was condemn'd to be abolish'd; And if his clemency had saved many, who the Laws had justly condemned, why should it not save a Law, that had done him and his Ancestours no small service, and was then doom'd to an undeerv'd Fate.

Consi. 10.

Consta. not. The Tenth and last Consideration, consists of several Testimonies, take some from Ancient Ecclesiastical Writers, some from modern Authors, he deals here in Gross, and is not pleas'd to name his Author from whence he has taken them, that the particulars might be examin'd. It is not impossible perhaps to Guess, but why should any man break in upon ones private reading, and intrude in his secret. If our Author had known any other Church History, or Collector, it is ten to one but he had chosen better, as for the first 300 years, it is true there could not be many Civil Laws against Dissenters in Christian Religion, yet if our Author had heard of the story of *Paul* of *Samosata*, he might have known, that the Civil Power was employ'd in defence of the Catholick Religion against Heresy, even before *Constantines* time: He names several Emperours, without I perceive he is unacquainted, for I am apt to beleive if he had known any thing of them, he would have left, at leastwise *Constantius* and *Valens*, out of his Catalogue of Tolerationours, and put in *Julian*, who out of pure love and kindness to Christian Religion, granted an universall Toleration to all Sects of dissenting Christians. *But their larger permission* (he says,) *was especially towards Jews.* It may be so, for these were indulg'd, when several Christian Sects were not, nay they have a Toleration in almost all Christian Kingdoms. And even in *Rome*, where there is small regard had of the Consciences of Protestant Dissenters, and all this, not because they prefer *Jews* to erring Christians, but because they conceive the Toleration of them, may not have so much danger, as that of Christian Sects. Yet of these Emperours whom he names, *Constan-*

time prosecuted the *Donatists*, and the *Arrians*, and sent several Bishops that refus'd to subscribe the Nicene Creed into Banishment. *Theodosius* the Great, and his Sons *Arcadius* and *Honorius* did restrain many Christian Sects in the Exercise of their Conscience, and succeeding Emperours were still more and more severe in requiring compliance with the Religion Establish'd in several Councils.

Ithacius, and *Idacius*, our Author observes, *were condemn'd by the* Gallican *Bishops, for being Authors of bringing the* Priscillianists *to Execution*. What Execution I pray? Of Death, they might be justly condemn'd for making themselves Prosecutors, in Cases of Bloud, but what is all this to our Laws, or Prosecution of Dissenters? St. *Augustin* was against Sanguinary Laws in Cases of Religion, so are we; several Fathers condemn the use of all force to bring a man to believe the Gospell, so do we. Religion must be voluntary, and cannot be forc'd so say we, and yet there may be discipline us'd to reduce the wilful & perverse, and they may be brought the better to see their mistake, by the Inconveneinces it may expose them to. The Sects of the *Jews*, were rather in Phylosophy, then Religion, for there was no Schisme nor Breach between them, in regard of the main Congregation which the Law requir'd, for they went all into the same Temple to Worship. The *Joseppins* would not suffer the *Trachonites* to be circumcised by force, no more do we, either Infidels or their Children to be baptiz'd by force, *Ethelbert* would not compel the Pagan *Saxons* to become Christians, and *Constantine*, and *Licinius*'s edict, allows all the Liberty of their Worship, because at that time the Circumstances of Christianity, and Heathenism did then require it to be so, and yet *Constantine* afterward

ward forbid the Heathen to sacrifice to their Idols, and shut up their Temples. *Bodin* had apostatiz'd to Judaisme, or perhaps Atheism, and it is no great matter what he says, nor is it of any great Authority, what *Barc-lay* says in a Romance, and the Reflexions of Political Writers, when they refine upon any Subject, are not always wise in the practice as wise as they are in the Contemplation: Sir *E. Cook* was never against the Execution of our Penal Laws against Dissenters, and what Judge *Jenkins* says is only with respect to the time in which they were spoken, when it seem'd Impossible, to make any accomodation without a General Toleration, but it pleas'd the providence of God to open another way which the wisest men were so far from foreseeing, that they durst hardly hope it, some years before. The words of King *Charles* the Martyr, had respect to the circumstances of this Kingdom when he wrote, and as for the preamble of the Statute of Queen *Mary*, it is but necessary, that those who cannot be brought to love, may be compell'd to fear their Prince, extream punishments such as are there intended, I believe we have none, and the extreamest of ours were forced by the Sedition, and not design'd against the Opinions of Dissenters, *and if these just Laws, that were made without any extream punishment*, had been duly executed, there had in probability been no occasion for other more severe penalties, so that if there be any addition of rigor, the Dissenters must thank those that favour'd and conniv'd at them for it, that incourag'd them to be insolent and enterprizing, and forc'd the Government, to take greater security of a Party that began to grow ungovernable.

As to the last ambiguous Citation, it is sufficient

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to reply, that the increase of Dissenters, did always increase not only the differences between King and People, and divided their interests, but likewise divided the interest and affections of the People, and therefore whatever way contribute most to the growth of a disaffected Party, cannot be healing, how moderate soever it may be, and if the Dissenters thought they would not thrive better under a Toleration, which I cannot see any reason why they should desire it.

And now having return'd this Answer to the Queres and considerations concerning Toleration, I might from the same Topicks that are us'd to perswade to it, proceed to shew that such a Toleration as is there demanded, is consistent neither with Christian Religion, right reason, nor the safety and Trade of the Kingdom. For what can be more unchristian, than to give wicked, or infatuated men license to corrupt the Gospel, and Blaspheme the name of Christ, under pretence of Religion? What more uncharitable than to give leave to presumptious men, to confirm themselves in their own rash mistakes, or to seduce others into the same snare of the Devil, *deceiving and being deceivid*? What more absurd or contrary to sound reason, then to give course to the most extravagant, the most absurd Opinions under the colour of Religion and Conscience? And to expose the Common People, who do for the most part mean better than they understand, to the Practice and Sollicitation of every tempting Impostor, and lastly what more inconsistant with the peace and safety of the Kingdom, than the cherishing of a Faction, which has once already overthrown this Monarchy and Church, and engag'd very lately in the same design? And if

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the ſafety of the Government cannot conſiſt with Toleration, Trade to be ſure can never ſtrive under it, for Traders will quickly leave a People, whoſe Government is at the diſcretion of a Faction, or at leaſtwiſe ſo much threaten'd with apprehenſions of chang, as to be in probable danger. But I ſhall wave this advantage, being content to keep upon the defenſive, however it be eſteem'd a part no leſs diſadvantagious in controverſie then it is in War, nor is it neceſſary to purſue the debate much farther, ſince it is ſufficient ground for any reaſonable man to preſume, that the reaſon and the equity of our Laws, are no leſs firm than the Authority by which they were enacted, when the ſhall perceive that all the exceptions made now againſt them, are either frivolous or falſe, wherefore ſince there are no ſufficient Reaſons alledg'd why the Laws ſhould comply with the Diſſenters, I will briefly ſuggeſt ſome reaſons why the Diſſenters ſhould comply with the Laws, without entring into the merits of the Cauſe, but keeping my ſelf only to the Principles of the ſeveral Sects; ſo that it muſt needs be highly unreaſonable to plead for a Toleration of ſuch Diſſenters, as might not only lawfully comply with all the Law requires, if their Conſciences were rightly inform'd, but may yet comply for the moſt part, even according to the Rule and the Conſcience they profeſs.

And here I muſt treat with them a part, as they are divided into ſeveral Religious Tribes, and Conventicles, for when they are join'd in one Politick and Seditious Rendezvous, it is no fit place to ſpeak of Religion. And

1. Why ſhould any Presbyterian deſire the Law againſt Conventicles ſhould be repeal'd upon his account,

count, since if he have not departed from his first Principles, he believes that separation from our Churches is not only unnecessary but unlawful. Several of the old *Puritans*, from whom our Presbyterians own their descent, have written as zealously against Separation, and the erecting of dissenting Congregrations as any of the Divines of the Church of *England*. Some of them indeed pretend that they go to Conventicles for greater Edification, but how can that be more edifying, that according to their Principles is unlawful? They may by the same way of reasoning, knock an old heavy teacher on the head, to make way for another that may be more powerful, and edifying. Therefore since a Presbyterian Conventicle, is as much a contradiction to the Principle and Conscience of Presbyterians, as to the Law of the Land, why should any body interceed for a Toleration of that, which their Principles disallow?

2. Why should any Presbyterian desire Toleration for not coming to our Churches, since by their Principles it is not unlawful to hold occasional Communion with our Church, *i. e.* some time to join with us in Common-Prayer, and the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, the last, and strictest Bond of Communion which Christians hold, and they have been hitherto very much to seek for reasons, why that Communion may not be as lawful to be us'd constantly, as it is upon occasions, the most plausible excuse they make is this, that they had Pastors of their own before the Re-establishment of our Church, and therefore tho' they may occasionally communicate with us, as those of one Parish may go to a Neighbouring Church upon occasion, yet they cannot do it constantly, because of their Antecedent Obligation to

their

their own Paſtors. This excuſe, if it were admitted, would not ſerve half the turn, for if this had any force, why ſhould it not have been admitted in the cauſe of thoſe Miniſters that were turn'd out illegally, to make Room for the Presbyterians? Why were theſe Loyal Miniſters deſerted by the Presbyterians of thoſe days, when they were forc'd by uſurp'd power from the exerciſe of their Function. Beſides there are but few of ſuch Miniſters now living, ſo that the excuſe ſerves but very few Presbyterian Aſſemblies, and there are fewer yet upon the places where they were Miniſters in the time of the late Rebellion, and therefore that relation ceaſes, which this excuſe does ſuppoſe; for why ſhould a company of Presbyterians in *London*, join themſelves to one that taught in *Hull* or *York*, or perhaps in *Scotland*, upon this pretence that they ought not to forſake their former Miniſters? So this can be no excuſe why that occaſional Communion which the Presbyterians profeſs lawful to hold with the Church of *England*, ſhould not be improv'd into a conſtant one; therefore there is no need of Toleration for thoſe who by their own Principle may Communicate with us upon occaſion, eſpecially the occaſion of an Office, for which they are to be qualify'd by ſuch Communion.

3. The Independants indeed hold a neceſſity of ſeparating from our, and all other Churches that are not of their form, and ſo their Principles render their compliance with ſome of our Laws more impracticable. Yet they have no reaſon to deſire a Toleration for Conventicles, ſince thoſe that the Law makes ſuch are not neceſſary to them according to their own Principles. For

The notion they have of a Church, makes ſuch

Conventicles as the Law puniſhes to be unneceſſary, for *Robinſon* affirms, that where two or three people are gathered there is a Church. *Cotton* requires a few more to make up the integrity of an Organick Church. *i. e.* 7, or 8. Now the Law makes no Aſſembly to be a Conventicle that has not near this number, beſides the Perſons of the Family, where this Meeting is held. Therefore, if the Law puniſh Independant Conventicles of greater numbers, it cannot truly be ſaid that they are perſecuted for Conſcience, for that which the Law makes their Crime, *i. e.* their exceeding ſuch a number, is a thing in their own Opinion unneceſſary.

4. If they cannot join with us in Common-Prayer, yet they may come to hear our Sermons, as well as thoſe of the Presbyterians, which they hear occaſionally, ſince no Principle of their Religion forbids it, and they require it in New *England*, of thoſe who are not of their Church; and there is no reaſon they ſhould have any Indulgence in ſuch things as a miſinform'd Conſcience makes neceſſary to them, before they ſhew themſelves willing to comply with the Law in every thing wherein their Conſcience will give them leave.

5. Our Anabaptiſts, being of near kin to the Independants, and having the ſame notions in a manner with them, concerning the neceſſity and the number of a Church; are concluded, by the ſame things as have been offer'd, againſt the Toleration of Independant Conventicles.

6. But of all Sects the *Quakers* have the leaſt reaſon to deſire Toleration for their meetings, becauſe they have not only caſt away the uſe of all Sacraments, but alſo of reading and Interpreting the Scriptures.

tures in their Assemblies. They profess to be g-
ed by the Spirit, *i. e.* Every one by his own, and that they have no other Guide or Teacher, but that Spirit that is within them. Wherefore they usually apply that Prophecy to themselves Litterally, *They shall not teach every one his Neighbour, nor every one his Brother, saying, know the Lord: For they shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest.* Wherefore if there is to be no outward teaching, why do they teach in their meetings? Or to what purpose is it to teach there, where either every man is inspir'd wi h the Spirit of God, and so needs no teaching, or else can reap no Benefit by any thing that is said, because he has not the Spirit, without which he cannot be taught? Besides, what use is there of silent meetings, where there is nothing at all said? If they have any promise of the Spirit, to be inspir'd in these meetings, how comes it to fail? If they have not, why do they meet? The Spirit of the Apostles was never wanting on any publick occasion, and we read of no Assembly of their time without Prayer, or Preaching. But the Spirit of the Quakers is of another sort, sometimes dumb, such as Christ us'd to cast out. And there is little Reason there should be any license for publick meeting of Persons only to gape, and groan in an uncertain expectation of being inspired; and since every one by those Enthusiasts is remitted to the Light within him, the most proper place, one would think for such dreamers, is a solitary and dark place, for they can attend better to that inward Light, that private Spirit, by Meditation, and turning their thoughts inwardly, than under the variety of application, that commouly distract mens thoughts in Publick Assemblies.

[illegible]
for Toleration, who have as little need of it, in that Part that regards their Assembling for Publick Worship, as any of the former, and those especially whose service is perform'd in a Language they do not understand, have the least need of a Publick Assembly; for if a mans understanding be absent from what is done, it does not import how far off the thing is from his presence, for he is as far from me to all intents of Benefit, that is out of the reach of my understanding, as he that is wholly out of my hearing, and a Mass that is said in *Rome*, may do me as much good by the intention of the Priest there, as one at which I may be present, where I understand nothing, but am only comprehended in the general expression of *pro populo Circumstante*. Besides, the practice of men telling over their beads in the [illegible] Worship, declares that they belong not to it, and have no occasion for it, for they cannot in any sense be said to be at the same service, who do not join in the same Prayer. If while the Priest says *Domine non sum dignus*, I say a *Pater*, and another an *Ave*, and a third an *Ora pro Nobis*, this is no more one service, than it is a Harmony when every one sings or plays what comes in his fancy without regarding the Tune or the Choras of any of his fellow Minstrels, whereas if they were separated every man apart, might make some kind of Musick.

When there was no King in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own Eyes.

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation.

To the Law and the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.

FINIS.

1684

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THE VANITY OF All Pretences FOR TOLLERATION,

WHEREIN

The Late *Pleas* for *Tolleration* are fully Answered;

And the Popular Arguments drawn from the Practice of the United *Netherlands* are stated at large, and shown to be weak, fallacious and insufficient.

LONDON,

Printed for *Sam. Smith*, at the *Prince's Arms* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. 1685.

It is certainly more agreeable to the Principles of him that ſpoke it, than thoſe of a Chriſtian, for the *Turks* permit *Jews* and *Chriſtians* to live among them, and to enjoy the Exerciſe of their Religion, becauſe they think both of them may be ſav'd by vertue of that Religion they reſpectively profeſs. But our Church paſſes a very ſevere Cenſure upon thoſe that ſhall ſay, that every man may be ſav'd by that Law or Sect which he profeſſes. But what if theſe Flowers prove Weeds, and grow too faſt, what if they annoy, and hurt the reſt, what if they are like Flowers *de Luce* ill Neighbours according to the Old Proverb, what then? They muſt certainly in prudence be a little diſcouraged and kept under, or by ſome good Art be brought to change their deſtructive and unſortable nature.

In what manner this Prophecy of the Reconciliation of Diſſenting Natures, *The Wolf ſhall lye down with the Lamb, and the Leopard with the Kid*, is to be accompliſh'd, I am not well aſſur'd, however I have ſome reaſon to ſuſpect, that it is not to be done by the way of an Univerſal Toleration, becauſe this deſcription ſhews not only, that they ſhall not hurt one the other, but that they ſhall be of one Fellowſhip and Communion; they ſhall feed and lye down together; whereas Toleration ſeems to do no more than to ſhut up theſe ſeveral Creatures in diſtinct apartments of the ſame Grate; but if you would know when a Presbyterian, or Independant, or Anabaptiſt, will not hurt, I can tell without the Spirit of Prophecy, it is then only when they have no power to do hurt.

Conſ. 7. *The* French *Proteſtants, who are Diſſenters from the Eſtabliſh'd Government of that Kingdom, are kindly receiv'd and ſuccour'd by* England, *and when the* French *King is highly blam'd by* Engliſh *Proteſtants, and perhaps too by ſome* Engliſh *Catholicks, for Perſecuting his peaceable Subjects, ſhall we do the ſame thing in our Kingdom, which we condemn in another? Therefore thou art inexcuſable O Man that judgeſt, for thou that judgeſt another, doeſt the ſame thing.*

I will not enquire what *Engliſh* Proteſtants do highly blame or condemn the Actions of the *French* King; thoſe of my acquaintance are not very forward to cenſure and condemn Princes, nor can it be concluded, that whoſoever is kind to a Stranger forc'd out of his Countrey, does preſently engage himſelf in the whole Merit of his Cauſe. But as for the *French* Proteſtants, we conceive our compaſſion to be the more due to them, becauſe they ſuffer for a Religion, which we verily believe to be true, which we are not able to ſay of ſeveral of thoſe that plead for Toleration. In the next place, they were peaceable, and had not provok'd their Prince by any Seditious or Turbulent Behaviour, in the Minority of this King, when the diſcontents of *France* were very high, and the Authority of the Government low. They behav'd themſelves ſo well as to deſerve his publick acknowledgment, which I believe our Diſſenters are too modeſt to pretend to; for if they ſhould; yet there is hardly any body ſo ignorant of their proceedings, but can juſtly reproach them

with having laid hold on every advantage of publick distress, to weaken first, then to destroy the Government: They never fail'd to join themselves with every Faction against the Crown, and still brought a form'd Faction to every discontented great Man, and offer'd themselves ready instruments of his Ambition or Revenge. But we have yet farther cause to Commiserate the sufferings of the *French* Protestants, because they tell us, and we have no reason to disbelieve them, that they were inflicted without Process or Form of Law, and directly against particular Rights and Priviledges granted to them by former Kings.

For their Churches had been long ago taken into the protection of the Government, and establish'd by Laws. Special Judicatures were erected in their favour, where the one half were of their Religion, and several other Priviledges granted them, to secure their persons and estates from Oppression, and the malice of their Enemies; and how they have forfeited all, I do not know. But our Protestant Dissenters were never own'd by our Laws, nor mentioned in them, but as a factious and seditious Party, that was by all due means to be suppress'd. There never was any agreement or accomodation between the Government and them; for while they could hold their arms in their hands, they would never hearken to any, and therefore it is no wonder if we have so many Laws against Dissenters, to forbid Conventicles, to oblige them to come to Church; since this Government thought they could never take too great security, from a Party they

they had found to be implacable. *Therefore thou art inexcuſable O man*, whoever thou art, that wouldſt ſtir up the Reader, nay recommend to the Parliament for a Parellel Caſe with ours, one that has ſo little reſemblance with it.

Top. 3. We are come now to the third and laſt Topick of the Advocates for Toleration, and that is the benefit and advantage of the Kingdom, by Improvement of Trade, to which Indulgence is eſteem'd to be ſo ſingular a Nurſe, that it cannot poſſibly thrive or ſubſiſt without it. Wherefore the D. of B. makes this Quere, *Whether the practice of it, i. e.* of uſing any compulſion or reſtraint towards mens Conſciences, *has not alwaies been ruinous and deſtructive to thoſe Countreys, where it has been us'd either in Monarchies or Common-wealths? and whether the contrary practice has not been ſucceſful in all thoſe Countreys, where it has been us'd, either in Monarchies or Common-wealths?*

We have great obligation to this Noble Perſon, for waving all the advantages which a fruitful wit might have given him upon this Subject, of reaſoning without end of the poſſible or probable miſchiefs or advantages ariſing to Monarchies or Common-wealths, from the granting or refuſing Toleration; and for referring this whole diſpute to the deciſion of experience. The Queſtion therefore cannot but have an eaſy iſſue, becauſe any man of ordinary underſtanding, that has read ſome Hiſtory,

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or made any Obſervation in the World, may be capable of deciding it. As to the firſt part of the demand I do believe there have been, and are ſeveral Kingdoms that have receiv'd no manner of damage, by denying a Toleration to ſeveral Religions. What Calamity has befallen *Denmark* or *Sweden* upon this account, where you will meet with no other Churches, but the *Lutherans* and if ſome Indulgence has been heretofore offered there to People of other Nations, this comes not under our Queſtion, for ſtrangers may be more ſafely tolerated than Subjects, becauſe the removal of them, when they grew troubleſome is more eaſy, and has not ſo bad conſequence. But not to Travel ſo far for an exception to this General Quære, I beleive there was no Kingdom more flouriſhing than this was under Queen *Elizabeth* and King *James* I. And yet then there was as great or greater reſtraint upon Conſcience, as at any time ſince: The *Roman* Catholicks, though a very numerous and formidable Party in the beginning of the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, were brought to our Churches, by the ſingle force of the Act of Uniformity, which left Diſſenters to the Cenſures of the Church, and added no other puniſhment than a light mulct of a Shilling for every default. And this Uniformity that is the Contradiction of Toleration, did in a few years ſo diminiſh that Party, that the Pope was oblig'd to command thoſe who retain'd any reverence for his Authority, to ſeparate themſelves, and to abſtain from coming to our Churches: It would have been a ſtrange Paradox in Politicks, in thoſe daies, to plead

plead for the Toleration of those the Government did so much fear. But however, this Compulsion did not prove in the least *ruinous*, or destructive to this Kingdom: And when that Party fell into dangerous enterprizes, the Laws grew still more and more severe, in obliging them to a conformity with the establish'd Religion.

The Puritans were as little indulg'd by that Queen, as the Papists, as her Laws do sufficiently declare, and all her time by due execution of Laws; that Faction was low and inconsiderable, that the care taken then to suppress them, seemed to proceed rather from the foresight of such troubles, as this Faction might create to succeeding Princes, than any apprehension of present danger. I need not mention those Anabaptists, and wild Fanaticks, that were put to death in her time, not so much I conceive for matters of Religion, as crimes against the State, it is enough that all the World knows, that there was no Toleration in those daies, and yet they were as serene, as prosperous, as happy, as any pass'd over the head of this Nation, at least-wise during the late Usurpation, which was the only time of Toleration in this Kingdom.

If we can give any credit to those Observations, which our Republicans and Dissenters have made of the Original of the late Confusions, we owe them all to a pretended Toleration, or some secret Connivance which they suspected, and from this root they deduce all that followed; true or false, real

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or pretended; the Enemies of the Government made much more advantage of it, than either the Government, or those for whom the favour was said to be intended.

I might instance in Monarchy's, and Commonwealths of the *Roman* Communion, that are of Opinion, that they have received no great prejudice by not granting a Toleration for all Sects of Religion; and if some of the most zealous Persecutors of the Reformation have fallen into extraordinary decay, we may impute it to the Judgment of God upon them for resisting the Truth with so great Cruelty, and not for denying licence to every thing or Sect, that had the pretence or Cant of Religion. Besides in those Countreys, some that have inquired into the reasons of their decay, have observed several other false measures, much more pernicious than the denying of Toleration.

The last Exception I shall make is from the Common-wealth and Kingdom of the *Jews*, which never flourish'd more than when there was no Toleration, never was in worse Condition, than when there was; And this instance has something more of Authority than the rest, because this People were govern'd by Gods own Laws, and sometime more immediately by God himself as it were in Person, and yet during all the time of his Theocracy, there is not the least Indulgence or Liberty of Conscience to be found upon Record.

Nay, so far was his Government from any such thing, that he made a perpetual Decree, that if any Person,

Person, or City, or Tribe, should fall away from his Worship, and serve other Gods, the rest instead of Indulging, or neglecting the errors, were to prosecute them to utter destruction.

Now, lest it may be thought, that under Theocracy this might be just, because Idolatry was a sort of High Treason, but in other Governments the reason ceases; it is plain that the same Law was put in Execution by the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*; who are not only commended by the inspir'd Writers, but observed to have been bless'd with unusual prosperity for those prosecutions. I would not be thought to recommend these Proceedings, as Precedents to be transcrib'd by Christian Princes, it is only upon the Question of Fact, that I produce this instance, to shew there may be such a thing as a prosperous Kingdom or Common Wealth, without the help of a general Toleration.

As to the second part of the Quere; *Has not the contrary practice been always successful to those Countries where it has been us'd, either in Monarchies or Common Wealths.* I think it a hard matter to find many Kingdoms or Common Wealths, where a general Toleration has been us'd; some have endur'd one, or perhaps two sorts of Dissenters in Religion, but this does not answer the end of those Queres, or of the *Considerations, which is universal Toleration*; but have not those been most successful that have tolerated most? This is not certain, for I think in the time of the late Usurpation, there was a great variety of Sects permitted to use their several ways, but the success, God be thanked, was such as honest men did wish and pray for; they had

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too great success indeed at first against the King and the Church, but then Toleration was scarce begun or design'd; there was then but one Rule of Uniformity, the Covenant was impos'd upon all; And the Independants did for a good while dissemble their Exceptions. But afterwards when every Sect demanded the liberty of its own way, and Religions were multiply'd beyond Computation, the Fruits of Toleration did quickly appear, every Sect as it gather'd a little strength from a State of Toleration began to affect Dominion, and this did quickly so dismite, and rend the Body of those Tyrants, that it was impossible for them longer to subsist, and so made way to that glorious Revolution, whose influence makes us still happy and prosperous, and it makes no difference in this case, whether a Government be rightful or usurp'd; the same method of Indulgence will have the same consequence, only Usurpers have more excuse for allowing Toleration, because it is more necessary for them, than for a Rightful and long Establish'd Dominion; and therefore tho' it be a dangerous course, they must take it, because they have no better to take.

I know the Example of the United Privinces is often Recommended by our Dissenters, and is mentioned by the Authour of the *Considerations*, and indeed it equally serves both their occasions, for a Common Wealth, and Toleration; however, I believe this instance is commonly swallow'd down whole without considering the particular reasons or circumstances that may induce them to tolerate some Religions, which may render their case very different from ours. *Some Religions*, I say, because they do not tolerate all, or whatever they do at this time, they have been in

in the memory of man so far from allowing an Universal Toleration, that they exceeded all their Protestant Neighbours in violence and severity, against those that dissented from their Establish'd Religion, tho' in matters very obscure, and of insuperable difficulty. However since this Example of the *Dutch*, is insisted upon by all the Advocates for Toleration, as an unanswerable Argument of the benefit of that course, I will give a brief account of such circumstances, as determined them to Indulgence, and the security they take against all the civil consequences of it; neither of which are to be found in our Government.

In the first place, their Common Wealth was Originally made up of several Religions, or Sects, which are as essential parts of their Constitution, for they were not only preserv'd by Strangers from *England*, and *France*, and *Germany*, that Fought their Battels, but many out of *Germany* and *France*, fled thither as to a common refuge; and were all as it were incorporated into this Common Wealth; every one of these Nations had their Churches not only tolerated, but Establish'd by Authority, and paid by the Government; so every Nation and Sect, use their own Forms and Languages, only the *English* are much degenerated, partly by their own fault, inclining to the Puritan way, and accommodating themselves to the manner of the Country, partly by the care which the *Dutch* do, and have ever us'd to discourage Episcopal Ministers, making great scruple of admitting any one they suspect to have Episcopal Ordination. So Toletation was at first the necessity, not the choice of that People. But after this Establishment,

the measure of their Toleration being full, whoever oppos'd the Religion Establish'd, and departed from the Rule of their Church, found but very sorry quarter. When the *Socinians* appear'd first in those Countries, the States took the Alarm, and Banish'd those Heretick out of all their Dominions. Then *Arminius* his Scholars, presum'd to find fault with the *Dutch* Catechism, which was their Establish'd Doctrine of their Church, and to divide Communion upon it; they were condemned by the Synod of *Dort*, and the Sentence was Executed by the Magistrate, with so great severity, that all the Neighbouring Countries were fill'd with the complaint of the suffering Remonstrants. The most Eminent and Active of whom were forced to fly their Country, or to endure close Imprisonment at home, so that, tho' they had more different Religions in their first Constitution than we, yet they endeavour'd, we see, to keep their first Establishment entire, as well as we do ours, by forcibly suppressing those that assaulted it; nay, they us'd greater severities upon this occasion towards their Dissenters, than ever we have done to ours. Yet during this prosecution of Dissenters, they had the best success that ever happened to that Common Wealth; before that time they struggl'd for life, but now they enlarg'd their Frontiers and their Trade, and advanc'd so far in strength and reputation, as to become the most powerful Common Wealth in *Europe*; not that their success and prosperity is to be imputed to this Persecution, but it seems by this instance, that forcible means to matters of Conscience does not always ruin, nor is the good success of a People in Trade or War always to be imputed to a

general Toleration. I do not pretend to justify those proceedings, nor do I alledge them upon any other account, than to shew that *Dutch* Toleration, has bounds, and that they have been prosperous while they prosecuted, a very considerable Party, both for number and interest, upon the account of Religion.

But besides the difference of their first Constitution, and ours, there are several other circumstances in their Government, that renders Toleration less dangerous to them than it is to us.

1. The *Dutch* Populace have no voice at all in chusing of their Magistrates; there are neither Mayors, nor Aldermen, nor Sheriffs, nor Common Council, nor Knights and Burgesses for Parliament, to be Elected by their Commonalty. There are no Juries to Judge of Matter of Fact, or of Right by way of Concomitance, in any Causes Criminal or Civil. So that tho' the number of any Sect may increase, yet has it but very little influence upon the Government, since it can have no hand in disposing of Publick Offices; nor are the Members of it capable of any, whereas no Sect can thrive with us, but you presently find the evil effect of it in our Parliaments, in our Juries, and consequently in all the distribution of Justice, and especially in the Government, and temper of our Corporations.

2. As the People have no part in the choice of their Magistrates, so neither can any one be admitted to any part of their Government, who is not of

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the States Religion, and this to appear not by any ſingle Teſt, as once coming to Church, or Receiving of the Sacrament in order to be qualify'd, but by the courſe of their Life, ſo that if any Perſon have given any ſuſpition to that Colledge of Magiſtrates, into which he is ambitious to be received, that he is not in his Heart of their Religion, there is no more hopes of his ſucceeding, than that a Perſon ſhould be made Pope, who is under imputation of Hereſie.

3. It is ſaid, that the Government of their Cities have a more abſolute and ſummary way of Proceeding with Perſons ſuſpected of any deſign or practice, to the prejudice of the publick quiet, and thoſe oblique and ſquinting diſcourſes, and practices of Sedition, that can ſcarce give matter to an Information with us, are there eaſily ſuppreſs'd by an admonition, for ſuch Perſons to depart the place.

4. The temper of the People is ſomething more Phlegmatick and leſs zealous than ours; the ſeveral Sects are content with following their Trade all the Week, and their Religion on *Sunday*, without troubling their Heads with gaining *Proſelytes*, or adding to their numbers, whereas with us every Sectary, almoſt, is a kind of Apoſtle, and is in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, ſtill Preaching up his own way, and practizing upon all thoſe with whom he has to do, and railing againſt what is uppermoſt.

Now the Diſſenters who magnify beyond meaſure, the happineſs of the *Dutch* in the uſe of a General Toleration, would be very loath to purchaſe it at

at the ſame rate, that is, by reſigning up for that Liberty of Conſcience, all ſuch Liberties and Priviledges of Engliſhmen, whereby they are made capable of giving diſturbance to the Government. I am affraid there would be many Diſſenters found upon the Tryal very unwilling for a licence to go to Conventicles; to forbear going to Elections of Parliament Men; and to oblige themſelves not to go to the *Guild Hall*, provided they be excuſed for not going to Church.

Yet after all, the *Dutch* Toleration has one poſſible diſadvantage, and that a heavy one, that ſeeing there are ſome *Sects* now tolerated, almoſt as numerous as that Party of the Eſtabliſh'd Religion, ſome of theſe either by Domeſtick Tumult, or Forreign ſupport, may eſtabliſh themſelves in the place of thoſe who are now in Authority, and by putting out a ſmall number of men now in Government, not only make themſelves Maſters of it, but maintain and keep it by the number and ſtrength they have already; and which will more and more encreaſe by the Acceſſion of thoſe whoſe Religion is gain, of which ſort that Country has its ſhare. Whereas in thoſe Countries where there are indeed ſeveral Religions, if the Diſſenters are ſo kept under as to bear no proportion to thoſe of the Eſtabliſhment, though they may make a Tumult, or get the better for ſome little time by the advantage of ſurprize, yet will they never be able to maintain themſelves, and muſt give way to the Reſtauration of the firſt Eſtabliſhment.

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The Conſiderator is very particular upon this Topick, and does not only tell us that proſecuting of Diſſenters deſtroys Trade, but inſtances in ſome Proſecutions of ſo ill conſequence, that the King and Council were forc'd to over-rule them, or elſe vaſt multitudes of Poor People, who were not any ways infected with the Opinions of Diſſenters, muſt have been undone.

Conſ. 8. *Proſecuting Diſſenters* (he ſaies) *is a great diſadvantage to the Trade of the Kingdom, they being a chief Part of the Trading People, and conſequently Liberty of Conſcience, muſt be the moſt effectual means to reſtore it.*

I have good reaſon to believe that our Author over-reckons, when he makes the Diſſenters *a chief Part of the Traders*: For though they conſiſt chiefly of Trades-men, and thoſe of the ſmaller ſort, yet they are but an inconſiderable Part in reſpect of the whole. And we muſt note, that all are not Diſſenters out of Conſcience, that ſpeak favourably of their Party, or favour them in a Vote; and it is not unlikely, but that an equal Execution of the Laws, might diſcover to us a great ſecret, that the twentieth Part of thoſe who are reputed for Diſſenters, do not ſtand in need of a Toleration; what our Conſiderer ſaies of *reſtoring of Trade*, is to ſuggeſt that it is decay'd, whereas it is notoriouſly known, that it never was at a greater height in this Kingdom than it is at preſent. But when Diſſenters talk of deadneſs of Trade, you muſt underſtand, that the true meaning is only that they are diſcontented, and would

would fain make others so low, and because they have no reason, or dare not tell the true one, venture the shame of the World, by using a pretence that is notoriously false.

The Relation that follows of a cloathier, that was forc'd to leave his Trade and Habitation, and to leave the Poor People he employed upon the Parish, and of others of the same Trade, that combind to buy no Wool, and to abuse the Country, to be reveng'd of the Laws, I dare not vouch for true. But should they be all true, which is a very great rarity in the Reports of that Party, I know not what to say, but who can help it? Suppose that cloathier had broke, for Dissenters are frail and breakable as other men, and the Poor Workmen had gone a begging. It is a sad Case you will say so many People should be undone by a scurvy Law, that prosecutes men for paying of Debts, or suppose the man had dy'd, some Remedy must have been found, and some other means to maintain these Poor People, there might be more of the Trade that would have been glad of the opportunity of succeeding him, for the sullen men, that abus'd the Country, by combining not to buy, I think they deserved little favour upon that account, and in short upon this whole vapour of Trade, as if it were wedded only to Dissenters, it has been answered long ago, and those that threatn'd to withdraw their stocks were desir'd, to make their words good, and the King sufficiently assur'd, that the General Trade of the Kingdom should not suffer the least diminution, though no one Dissenter were concern'd in it. However it was then, it is very well known now, that there is a great deal more money in this Kingdom than can be employ'd

in Trade, and we are so far from being in a Condition that obliges us to Court men to proceed in trading, that the laying down of Trade, is like the laying down of an Office, men are not only courted to it, but bribid and bought to make room for those who are as it were shut out of the Exchange, by the extraordinary throng that is within.

Consi. 9. Our Consideratour transcribes several passages of late his Majesties Declaration from *Breda*, and some other out of Speeches since his Restauration, I will not take upon me too answer them, but remit the Reader to those Reasons of the House of Commons, which satisfyed the King himself, so far as to pass the act of uniformity without any regard had to the Dissenters, the Declaration for indulgence set forth some years after upon better Consideration was revoked by the King, but no Council or Parliament were ever able to convince him so fully of the Reason of putting the Laws in Execution against Dissenters, as the Dissenters themselves, who made at last such returns of insolence and sedition, for all his indulgence, that he was forc'd for the preservation of himself and his Government, to call for the assistance of those Laws, and to order them to be put in effectual Execution, and we owe in wholy to this wisdom and foresight, that some of the most considerable of them are now in being, I mean that of the 35th of Queen *Elizabeth*, which he saved by his Prerogative Law, as well as men when it was condemn'd to be abolish'd: And if his clemency had saved many, who the Laws had justly condemned, why should it not save a Law, that had done him and his Ancestours no small service, and was then doom'd to an undeserv'd Fate.

Consi. 10. The Tenth and last Consideration, consists of several Testimonies, take some from Ancient Ecclesiastical Writers, some from modern Authors, he deals here in Gross, and is not pleas'd to name his Author from whence he has taken them, that the particulars might be examin'd, It is not impossible perhaps to Guess, but why should any man break in upon ones private reading, and intrude in his secret. If our Author had known any other Church History, or Collector, it is ten to one but he had chosen better, as for the first 800 years, it is true there could not be many Civil Laws against Dissenters in Christian Religion, yet if our Author had heard of the Story of *Paul* of *Samosata*, he might have known, that the Civil Power was employ'd in defence of the Catholick Religion against Heresy, even before *Constantines* time: He names several Emperours, with whom I perceive he is unacquainted, for I am apt to believe if he had known any thing of them, he would have left, at leastwise *Constantius* and *Valens*, out of his Catalogue of Toleracions, and put in *Julian* who out of pure love and kindness to Christian Religion, granted an universal Toleration to all Sects of dissenting Christians. *But their larger permission* (he says,) *was especially towards Jews.* It may be so, for these were indulg'd, when several Christian Sects were not, nay they have a Toleration in almost all Christian Kingdoms. And even in *Rome*, where there is small regard had of the Consciences of Protestant Dissenters, and all this, not because they prefer *Jews* to erring Christians, but because they conceive the Toleration of them, may not have so much danger, as that of Christian Sects. Yet of these Emperours whom he names, *Constan-*

tine prosecuted the *Donatists*, and the *Arrians*, and sent several Bishops that refus'd to subscribe the Nicene Creed into Banishment. *Theodosius* the Great, and his Sons *Arcadius* and *Honorius* did restrain many Christian Sects in the Exercise of their Conscience, and succeeding Emperours were still more and more severe in requiring compliance, with the Religion Establish'd in several Councils.

Ithacius, and *Idacius*, our Author observes, *were condem'd by the* Gallican *Bishops, for being Authors of bringing the* Priscillianists *to Execution*: What Execution I pray? Of Death, they might be justly condemn'd for making themselves Prosecutors, in Cases of Bloud, but what is all this to our Laws, or Prosecution of Dissenters? St. *Augustin* was against Sanguinary Laws in Cases of Religion, so are we; several Fathers condemn the use of all force to bring a man to believe the Gospell, so do we. Religion must be voluntary, and cannot be forc'd so say we, and yet there may be discipline us'd to reduce the wilful & perverse, and they may be brought the better to see their mistake, by the Inconvenences it may expose them to. The Sects of the *Jews*, were rather in Phylosophy, then Religion, for there was no Schisme nor Breach between them, in regard of the main Congregation which the Law requir'd, for they went all into the same Temple to Worship. The *Josephins* would not suffer the *Trachonites* to be circumcised by force, no more do we, either Infidels or their Children to be baptiz'd by force, *Ethelbert* would not compel the Pagan *Saxons* to be come Christians, and *Constantine*, and *Licinius*'s edict, allows all the Liberty of their Worship, because at that time the Circumstances of Christianity, and Heathenism did then require it to be so, and yet *Constantine* afterward

ward forbid the Heathen to ſacrifice to their Idols, and ſhut up their Temples. *Bodin* had apoſtatiz'd to Judaiſme, or perhaps Atheiſm, and it is no great matter what he ſays, nor is it of any great Authority, what *Barc-lay* ſays in a Romance, and the Reflexions of Political Writers, when they refine upon any Subject, are not always wiſe in the practice as wiſe as they are in the Contemplation: Sir E. *Cook* was never againſt the Execution of our Penal Laws againſt Diſſenters, and what Judge *Jenkins* ſays is only with reſpect to the time in which they were ſpoken, when it ſeem'd Impoſſible, to make any accomodation without a General Toleration, but it pleas'd the providence of God to open another way which the wiſeſt men were ſo far from foreſeeing, that they durſt hardly hope it, ſome years before.

The words of King *Charles* the Martyr, had reſpect to the circumſtances of this Kingdom when he wrote, and as for the preamble of the Statute of Queen *Mary*, it is but neceſſary, that thoſe who cannot be brought to love, may be compell'd to fear their Prince, extream puniſhments ſuch as are there intended, I believe we have none, and the extreameſt of ours were forced by the Sedition, and not deſign'd againſt the Opinions of Diſſenters, *and if thoſe juſt Laws, that were made without any extream puniſhment*, had been duly executed, there had in probability been no occaſion for other more ſevere penalties, ſo that if there be any addition of rigor, the Diſſenters muſt thank thoſe that favour'd and conniv'd at them for it, that incourag'd them to be inſolent and enterprizing, and fore'd the Government, to take greater ſecurity of a Party that began to grow ungovernable.

As to the laſt ambiguous Citation, it is ſufficient

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to reply, that the increase of Dissenters, did always increase not only the differences between King and People, and divided their interests, but likewise divided the interest and affections of the People, and therefore whatever way contribute most to the growth of a disaffected Party, cannot be healing, how moderate soever it may be, and if the Dissenters thought they would not thrive better under a Toleration, which I cannot see any reason why they should desire it.

And now having return'd this Answer to the Queres and considerations concerning Toleration, I might from the same Topicks that are us'd to persuade to it, proceed to shew that such a Toleration as is there demanded, is consistent neither with Christian Religion, right reason, nor the safety and Trade of the Kingdom. For what can be more unchristian, than to give wicked, or infatuated men license to corrupt the Gospel, and Blaspheme the name of Christ, under pretence of Religion? What more uncharitable than to give leave to presumptious men, to confirm themselves in their own rash mistakes, or to seduce others into the same snare of the Devil, *deceiving and being deceiv'd*? What more absurd or contrary to sound reason, then to give course to the most extravagant, the most absurd Opinions under the colour of Religion and Conscience? And to expose the Common People, who do for the most part mean better than they understand, to the Practice and Sollicitation of every tempting Imposter, and lastly what more inconsistant with the peace and safety of the Kingdom, than the cherishing of a Faction, which has once already overthrown this Monarchy and Church, and engag'd very lately in the same design? And if

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the ſafety of the Government cannot conſiſt with Toleration. Trade to be ſure can never ſtrive under it, for Traders will quickly leave a People, whoſe Government is at the diſcretion of a Faction, or at leaſtwiſe ſo much threaten'd with apprehenſions of chang; as to be in probable danger. But I ſhall wave this advantage, being content to keep upon the defenſive, however it be eſteem'd a part no leſs diſadvantagious in controverſie then it is in War, nor is it neceſſary to purſue the debate much farther, ſince it is ſufficient ground for any reaſonable man to preſume, that the reaſon and the equity of our Laws, are no leſs firm than the Authority by which they were enacted, when the ſhall perceive that all the exceptions made now againſt them, are either frivolous or falſe, wherefore ſince there are no ſufficient Reaſons alledg'd why the Laws ſhould comply with the Diſſenters, I will briefly ſuggeſt ſome reaſons why the Diſſenters ſhould comply with the Laws, without entring into the merits of the Cauſe, but keeping my ſelf only to the Principles of the ſeveral Sects; ſo that it muſt needs be highly unreaſonable to plead for a Toleration of ſuch Diſſenters, as might not only lawfully comply with all the Law requires, if their Conſciences were rightly inform'd, but may yet comply for the moſt part, even according to the Rule and the Conſcience they profeſs.

And here I muſt treat with them a part, as they are divided into ſeveral Religious Tribes, and Conventicles, for when they are join'd in one Politick and Seditious Rendezvous, it is no fit place to ſpeak of Religion. And

1. Why ſhould any Presbyterian deſire the Law againſt Conventicles ſhould be repeal'd upon his account,

count, since if he have not departed from his first Principles, he believes that separation from our Churches is not only unnecessary but unlawful. Several of the old *Puritans*, from whom our Presbyterians own their descent, have written as zealously against Separation, and the erecting of dissenting Congregrations as any of the Divines of the Church of *England*. Some of them indeed pretend that they go to Conventicles for greater Edification, but how can that be more edifying, that according to their Principles is unlawful? They may by the same way of reasoning, knock an old heavy teacher on the head, to make way for another that may be more powerful, and edifying. Therefore since a Presbyterian Conventicle, is as much a contradiction to the Principle and Conscience of Presbyterians, as to the Law of the Land, why should any body interceed for a Toleration of that, which their Principles disallow?

2. Why should any Presbyterian desire Toleration for not coming to our Churches, since by their Principles it is not unlawful to hold occasional Communion with our Church, *i. e.* some time to join with us in Common Prayer, and the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, the last, and strictest Bond of Communion which Christians hold, and they have been hitherto very much to seek for reasons, why that Communion may not be as lawful to be us'd constantly, as it is upon occasions, the most plausible excuse they make is this, that they had Pastors of their own before the Re-establishment, of our Church, and therefore tho' they may occasionally communicate with us, as those of one Parish may go to a Neighbouring Church upon occasion, yet they cannot do it constantly, because of their Antecedent Obligation to

their

their own Pastors. This excuse, if it were admitted, would not serve half the turn, for if this had any force, why should it not have been admitted in the cause of those Ministers that were turn'd out illegally, to make Room for the Presbyterians? Why were these Loyal Ministers deserted by the Presbyterians of those days, when they were fore'd by usurp'd power from the exercise of their Function. Besides there are but few of such Ministers now living, so that the excuse serves but very few Presbyterian Assemblies, and there are fewer yet upon the places where they were Ministers in the time of the late Rebellion, and therefore that relation ceases, which this excuse does suppose; for why should a company of Presbyterians in *London*, join themselves to one that taught in *Hull* or *York*, or perhaps in *Scotland*, upon this pretence that they ought not to forsake their former Ministers? So this can be no excuse why that occasional Communion which the Presbyterians profess lawful to hold with the Church of *England*, should not be improv'd into a constant one; therefore there is no need of Toleration for those who by their own Principle may Communicate with us upon occasion, especially the occasion of an Office, for which they are to be qualify'd by such Communion.

3. The Independants indeed hold a necessity of separating from our, and all other Churches that are not of their form, and so their Principles render their compliance with some of our Laws more impracticable. Yet they have no reason to desire a Toleration for Conventicles, since those that the Law makes such are not necessary to them according to their own Principles. For

The notion they have of a Church, makes such

Conventicles as the Law punishes to be unnecessary; for *Robinson* affirms, that where two or three people are gathered there is a Church. *Corion* requires a few more to make up the integrity of an Organick Church. *i. e.* 7, or 8. Now the Law makes no Assembly to be a Conventicle that has not near this number, besides the Persons of the Family, where this Meeting is held. Therefore, if the Law punish Independant Conventicles of greater numbers, it cannot truly be said that they are persecuted for Conscience, for that which the Law makes their Crime, *i. e.* their exceeding such a number, is a thing in their own Opinion unnecessary.

4. If they cannot join with us in Common-Prayer, yet they may come to hear our Sermons, as well as those of the Presbyterians, which they hear occasionally, since no Principle of their Religion forbids it, and they require it in New *England*, of those who are not of their Church; and there is no reason they should have any Indulgence in such things as a misinform'd Conscience makes necessary to them, before they shew themselves willing to comply with the Law in every thing wherein their Conscience will give them leave.

5. Our Anabaptists, being of near kin to the Independants, and having the same notions in a manner with them, concerning the necessity and the number of a Church; are concluded by the same things as have been offer'd, against the Toleration of Independant Conventicles.

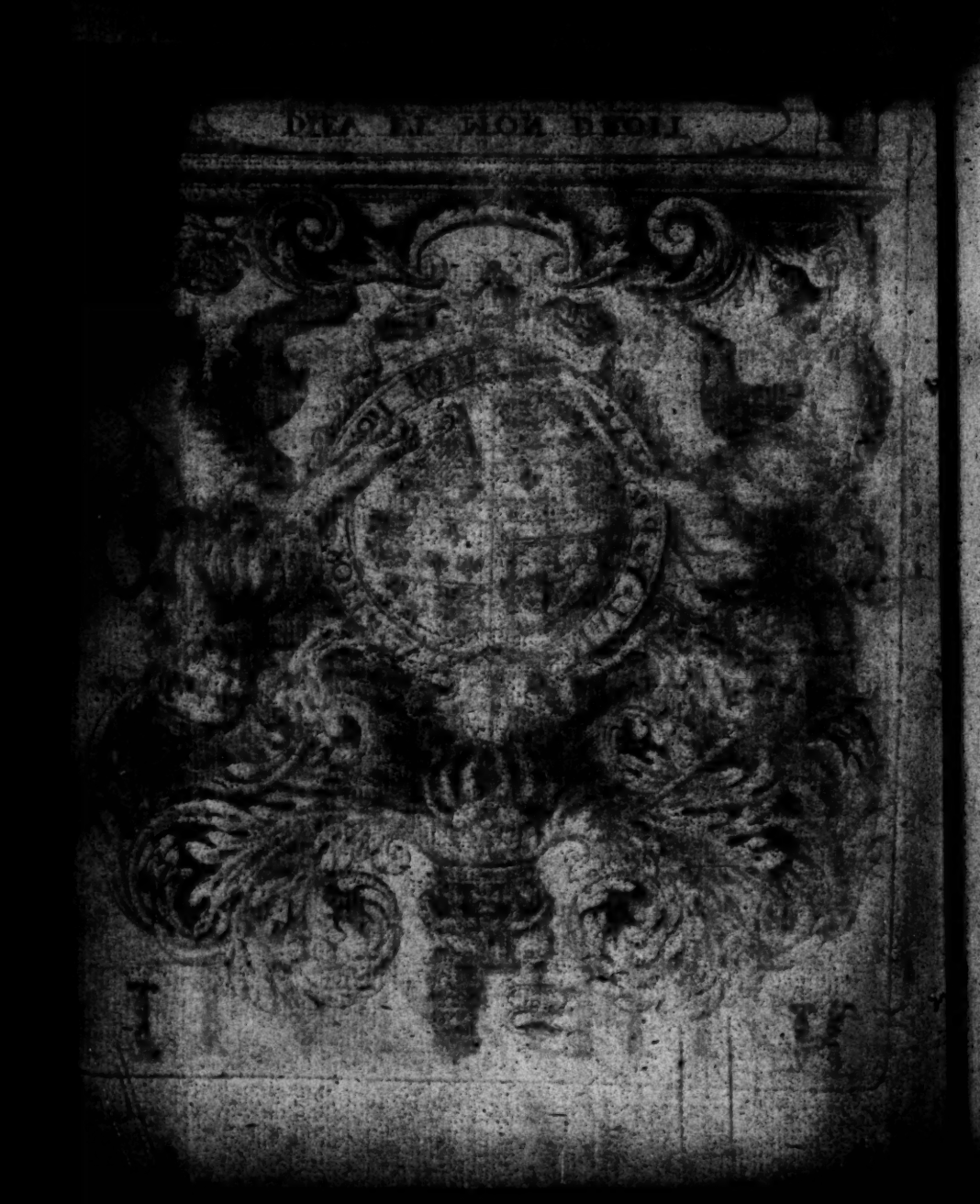
6. But of all Sects the *Quakers* have the least reason to desire Toleration for their meetings, because they have not only cast away the use of all Sacraments, but also of reading and interpreting the Scriptures

tures in their Assemblies. They profess to be guided by the Spirit, *i. e.* Every one by his own, and that they have no other Guide or Teacher, but that Spirit that is within them. Wherefore they usually apply that Prophecy to themselves Litterally, *They shall not teach every one his Neighbour, nor every one his Brother, saying, know the Lord: For they shall know the Lord from the least to the greatest.* Wherefore if there is to be no outward teaching, why do they teach in their meetings? Or to what purpose is it to teach there, where either every man is inspir'd with the Spirit of God, and so needs no teaching, or else can reap no Benefit by any thing that is said, because he has not the Spirit, without which he cannot be taught? Besides, what use is there of silent meetings, where there is nothing at all said? If they have any promise of the Spirit, to be inspir'd in these meetings, how comes it to fail? If they have not, why do they meet? The Spirit of the Apostles was never wanting on any publick occasion, and we read of no Assembly of their time without Prayer, or Preaching: But the Spirit of the Quakers is of another sort, sometimes dumb, such as Christ us'd to cast out. And there is little Reason there should be any license for publick meeting, of Persons only to gape, and groan in an uncertain expectation of being inspired; and since every one by those Enthusiasts is remitted to the Light within him, the most proper place, one would think for such dreamers, is a solitary and dark place, for they can attend better to that inward Light, that private Spirit, by Meditation, and turning their thoughts inwardly, than under the variety of application, that commonly distract mens thoughts in Publick Assemblies.

There are some other Sects amongst us, very earnest for Toleration, who have as little need of it in that Part that regards their Assembling for Publick Worship as any of the former, and those especially whose Service is performed in a Language they do not understand, have the least need of a Publick Assembly; for if a mans understanding be absent from what is done, it does not import how far off the thing is from his presence, for he is as far from me to all intents of Benefit, that is out of the reach of my understanding, as he that is wholly out of my hearing, and a Mass that is said in *Rome*, may do me as much good by the Intention of the Priest there, as one at which I may be present, where I understand nothing but am only comprehended in the general expression of *pro populo Circumstante*. Besides, the practice of men telling over their Beads in their Publick Worship, declares that they belong not to it, and have no occasion for it, for they cannot in any sense be said to be at the same service who do not join in the same Prayer. If while the Priest says *Domine non sum dignus*, I say a *Pater*, and another an *Ave*, and a third an *Ora pro Nobis*, this is no more one service, than it is a Harmony when every one sings or plays what comes in his fancy without regarding the Tune or the Chorus of any of his Fellow Minstrels, whereas if they were separated every man apart, might make some kind of Musick.

When there was no King in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own Eyes.

Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation.

To the Law and the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them.

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